Tamil TIMES

Vol.IV No.4 | 65p | FEBRUARY 1985

TAMIL TIMES

ISSN 0266-4488

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka.....£7.50

All other countries.....£12.50/$20

Published monthly by
TAMIL TIMES LTD
P.O. BOX 304
London W13 9QN
United Kingdom

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Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or the publishers.
The publishers assume no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photographs and artwork.

Printed By Astmoor Litho (TU) Ltd,
21-22 Arkwright Road, Runcorn, Cheshire.

INNOCENT TAMILS ARE BEING KILLED

— AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Innocent Tamils, including women and children, are being killed by the Sri Lankan security forces. Serious and widespread allegations of such extra-judicial killings by the security forces have been made from December 1 onwards. The allegations were accompanied by reports of large-scale arrests of 'suspects', most of them members of the male Tamil population and between 15 and 30 and ill-treatment and torture of detainees are continuing, states Amnesty International in its latest Report released in January 1985.

The 25-page Report adds that since the publication of its last report in June last year, 'Amnesty International has received several allegations that unarmed members of the civilian population belonging to the Tamil minority had been shot dead by members of the security forces at random and in reprisal for the killing of their colleagues. The number of these allegations has increased in recent months, for example: the secretary of the Jaffna Citizens Committee alleged that 65 innocent civilians had been shot dead by the security forces in Jaffna during November 1984 and detailed reports have now reached Amnesty International that as many as 90 unarmed civilians, nearly all Tamils, were shot dead in cold blood in the Mannar area on 4 December by army personnel allegedly in retaliation for the killing of one of their colleagues in a landmine explosion the same day. The government, as on several earlier occasions, initially denied that such killings had taken place. Following public disclosure of the discovery of the bodies, the government stated that those killed had been terrorists caught in 'an exchange of fire' and later suggesting there might have been 'innocent bystanders' among them. In this and other cases, evidence has since become available that these were in fact extrajudicial killings of randomly selected civilians by the security forces.' (Details of this incident, in the Mannar area on 4 December, appear elsewhere.)

Killed in reprisal

'A foreign correspondent visiting the Mannar area in mid-August 1984, to investigate allegations that five men were killed by the army in cold blood in reprisal for the killing of six soldiers on 11 August, reported:

' "Despite denials by the government, there . . . is credible evidence that Sri Lanka security forces have repeatedly engaged in reprisals against civilian population centres in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

IN SRI LANKA

'You are shot if you stay at home. You are shot if you go out. You are shot if you run when challenged. You are shot if you stand still. What can we do?'

— See page 3 —

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Tamil TIMES

PLAN FOR TAMIL LIQUIDATION

The long-laid plan for the total subjugation of the Tamil nation of Sri Lanka has now become publicly proclaimed state policy. The insidious scheme followed hitherto of alienation of traditional Tamil territory in the north and east of Sri Lanka, through systematic state-aided colonisation, to the Sinhalese majority has been superseded by a deliberate, aggressive and open policy of liquidation of the Tamil national identity.

The plan was unveiled by the Sri Lankan Minister of National Security, while addressing a conference of district ministers convened by President Jayewardene recently. Announcing that the government had already finalised plans to settle 30,000 Sinhalese families in the predominantly Tamil north this year, the Minister spelt out a further move to select 250 families from each of the Sinhalese constituencies for settlement in the northern and eastern provinces. Such settlements would be created this year in Vavuniya, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts, and extended to the Jaffna district next year. The aim is to counter the claim of the Tamil people that the northern and eastern provinces are their traditional homelands.

At a subsequent public meeting the President himself dismissing the Tamil claim of traditional homelands as unacceptable announced that the government would carry forward a programme of settling Sinhalese in the north and east to reflect the nationwide population ratio of 75 per cent Sinhalese to 25 per cent minorities.

The government's policy was put more clearly and bluntly by the Secretary to the Ministry of State, Mr Buddhi Gunatunga, in an interview with the correspondent of the 'Washington Post' (5.2.85) when he said that 'the settlers, who will be given land and other financial incentives, are intended to achieve in the northern and eastern provinces the same demographic proportion as elsewhere in the country so that in future there won't be such a thing as a concept of a traditional ethnic homeland'.

Already the District Ministers have been asked to select lands for settling Sinhalese. A separate government department has also been created. And, according to the Minister of National Security, the new Sinhalese settlers would be given military training and provided with arms and ammunition.

It is clear that the whole strategy has been fully worked out. What was once a hidden plan has come into the open. The deprivation of a million Tamils of their nationality and franchise soon after independence in 1948, the imposition of Sinhala as the sole official language, the granting to Buddhism the status of a state religion, the Government-sponsored colonisation by Sinhalese of thousands of acres of land in the traditional Tamil areas of the Eastern Province and parts of the Northern Province, the open and undiluted discrimination against Tamils in the fields of education and employment, the oft-repeated state-organised island-wide anti-Tamil pogroms and the continuing campaign of unmitigated military terror, pillage, plunder, death and destruction are all part of the hitherto hidden agenda for the liquidation of the Tamil nation.

For the Tamil people, the implications of the plans unveiled by the President and his Ministers are serious. With the deprivation of the franchise of a million Tamil plantation workers, the Tamil parliamentary representation was reduced by 50 per cent. Today 72 per cent Sinhalese enjoy 87 per cent representation in parliament. If the demographic composition of the northern and eastern provinces is changed to reflect the nationwide population proportion of 75 per cent Sinhalese and 25 per cent other ethnic groups, the Sinhalese representation in parliament would become almost 100 per cent, and their political and ethnic domination would become total.

The Tamils in other parts of the country, when subjected to uncontrolled, and very often state-sponsored mob violence, were able to run for safety to the north and east because those areas remained predominantly Tamil.

The government plans would result in there being no safe place for Tamils and other minority groups in the whole country. They could live, if they so desire, by the tender mercy and the tolerance of the majority Sinhalese. This can only be earned by total subservience to the demands and dictates of the Sinhala majority; and while the Sinhalese politicians can claim the whole of Sri Lanka as a Sinhala-Buddhist country, the Tamil people should not have the right to

SRI LANKA'S AGONY

The tragedy unfolding in the South Asian state of Sri Lanka, known as a showplace of democracy and development, finds its causes in historic tensions between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the Hindu Tamil minority. Tamil terrorists upset the balance two years ago, and the government's hesitations and the army's excesses have since made a bad situation worse.

Rajiv Gandhi has assured visitors that India has no intention of a military intervention in Sri Lanka. But the situation on the ground is deteriorating. Terrorism, as India's own recent

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refer even to a corner of the country as their traditional homeland.

The die is cast. The question before the Tamil people is clear and simple, although serious. It is one of survival or liquidation. The Tamil people are determined to survive and if that means total mobilisation of their limited resources, this has to be done. They will not meekly surrender their birthright to live with self-respect in the land of their birth. If the Sinhala-dominated government thinks that by the superiority of numbers and with lethal weapons they can subjugate the Tamil people they are sadly mistaken. The Tamil militants, although few in number and ill-equipped, have already demonstrated what can be achieved when a people's fundamental rights and freedom are at stake.

We warn the government that it has to take full responsibility for the consequences of arming and sending the Sinhalese people to settle in Tamil areas to terrorise the Tamil population. What is now a limited struggle between the Tamil militants and the oppressive organs of the State would soon be transformed into a full-scale civil war between the Sinhalese and the Tamils if the government goes ahead with its plans. What happened in Dollar and Kent farms should serve as a lesson to those in government who flaunt their authority to drive out long-established Tamils and replace them with imported Sinhalese.

We would also like to address a word of caution to the Sinhalese people not to precipitate a civil war by becoming unwitting tools of a tyrannical government. The Tamil people now engaged in a desperate bid for survival have no option left but to continue the struggle until peace with honour and security is won.

Sikh explosion amply demonstrated, hardens all sides. The first responsibility for what happens in Sri Lanka falls on the government in Colombo. But India also has a heavy responsibility. (Editorial, Washington Post, 7.2.85)

Michael Hamlyn on Sri Lanka's failures to curb army attacks on Tamils

TERROR THAT FEEDS A BURNING FUSE

The Sinhalese, the majority race in Sri Lanka, are essentially friendly people. They smile easily and wave as you drive past. But in putting down the insurrection of Tamils seeking a separate state in the northern and eastern provinces, they have displayed nothing short of barbarism.

The Mannar massacre is a case in point. On December 4, a vehicle carrying an army patrol was blown up by a mine on the road leading through the jungle to the small northern town. One soldier was killed and 11 wounded.

In the carnage that followed, troops poured out of their camps and, according to the townspeople, killed more than 100 civilians. One group stopped a bus and ordered everyone off. The conductor, a Sinhalese, not a Tamil, told the soldiers that he was responsible for the safety of his passengers and before they killed them, they would have to shoot him first.

The soldiers accordingly shot him first, and then shot all the other male passengers, including the Muslim driver. Another 20 died when the same treatment was meted out to a busload of passengers travelling in the opposite direction.

Off the main road, an army jeep drove into the village of Parappankandal. The soldiers fired indiscriminately, killing 12 people including a mother nursing her infant child at her breast. The child survived, though three toes were blown away by the bullet that killed its mother.

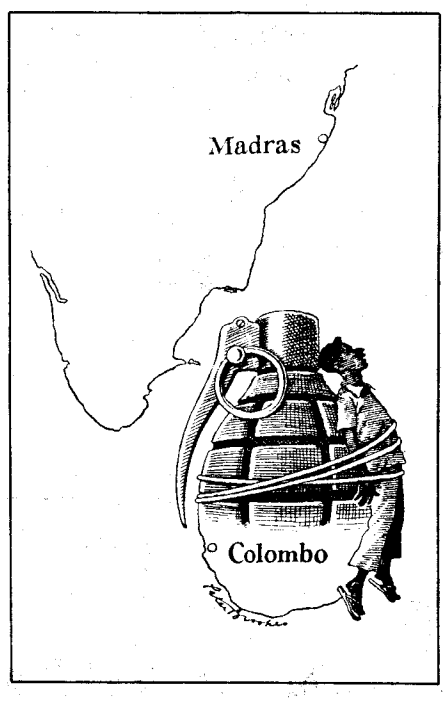
No inquests will be held on these and other killings because, according to the security forces, the victims died in cross-fire between the army and terrorists, and in such circumstances inquests can be dispensed with under the draconian emergency regulations.

Soldier ran amok

A similar fabrication surrounds the death of 39 Tamil prisoners at Vavuniya, 70 miles from Mannar, also in early December. The official version is that they were killed while trying to escape. In fact, a senior government official told me, 'a soldier ran amok and emptied the magazine of an automatic weapon at them'.

Some senior government officials are ashamed of events like these and are pressing for action to be taken against those responsible. But nothing has been done. Since the anti-Sikh riots in India which followed the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi, 2,600 people have been charged with various offences. Since the anti-Tamil disturbances of July 1983, only 169 Sri Lankans have been charged. There has not been one court martial.

Military atrocities work against the Sinhalese interest. Tamil resistance is stiffened and hatred for the government grows. They also increase the possibility of bringing about what the



Sinhalese most fear — the direct participation of India. At the very least, the tales of horror circulating in India make the likelihood of any clampdown on the Tamil rebels operating out of southern India more remote.

My despatch describing one jungle massacre was given considerable publicity in the Indian press. It was the lead story in two of the largest circulation papers in the country. The prominence given to it prompted an instant denial by the Sri Lankan High Commission in Delhi, which described it as 'totally false'.

Such blanket denials are counter-productive. This one led the exiled leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front, Mr A. Amirthalingam, to find his own eyewitnesses to the attack in refugee camps in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu and to make the point that victims of the terror are being compelled to leave Sri Lanka and seek shelter in India.

The number of refugees entering Tamil Nadu appears to be increasing. According to Mr Amirthalingam, 2,400 have crossed the narrow strip of water dividing the two countries in the past two weeks. The flow, he said, reminded him of the early days of the

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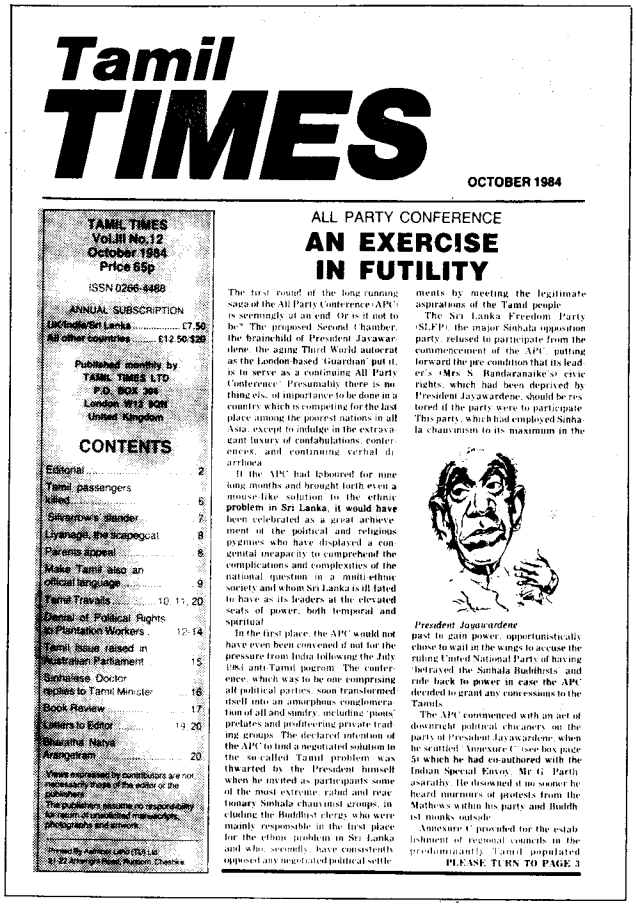

Tamil TIMES

OCTOBER 1984

TAMIL TIMES
Vol.III No.12
October 1984
Price 65p

ISSN 0266-4488

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
UK/India/Sri Lanka £7.50
All other countries ..... £12.50/$20

Published monthly by
TAMIL TIMES LTD
P.O. BOX 394
London W13 8QH
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Printed by Adlestrop Ltd (TU) Ltd.
91-93 Arlington Road, Runcorn, Cheshire.

ALL PARTY CONFERENCE

AN EXERCISE IN FUTILITY

The latest round of the long running saga of the All Party Conference (APC) is seemingly at an end. Or is it not to be? The proposed Second Chamber, the brainchild of President Jayawardene, the aging Third World autocrat as the London-based 'Guardian' put it, is to serve as a continuing All Party Conference. Presumably there is no thing else, of importance to be done in a country which is competing for the last place among the poorest nations in all Asia, except to indulge in the extravagant luxury of confabulations, conferences, and continuing verbal diarrhoea.

If the APC had laboured for nine long months and brought forth even a mouse-like solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, it would have been celebrated as a great achievement of the political and religious geniuses who have displayed a congenital incapacity to comprehend the complications and complexities of the national question in a multi-ethnic society and whom Sri Lanka is ill-fated to have as its leaders at the elevated seats of power, both temporal and spiritual.

In the first place, the APC would not have even been convened if not for the pressure from India following the July 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom. The conference, which was to be one comprising all political parties, soon transformed itself into an amorphous conglomeration of all and sundry, including 'pons' predators and profiteering private trading groups. The declared intention of the APC to find a negotiated solution to the so-called Tamil problem was thwarted by the President himself when he invited as participants some of the most extreme, rabid and reactionary Sinhala chauvinist groups, including the Buddhist clergy who were mainly responsible in the first place for the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka and who, secondly, have consistently opposed any negotiated political settlements by meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the major Sinhala opposition party, refused to participate from the commencement of the APC, putting forward the pre-condition that its leader's (Mrs. S. Bandaranaike's) civic rights, which had been deprived by President Jayawardene, should be restored if the party were to participate. This party, which had employed Sinhala chauvinism to its maximum in the

President Jayawardene

past to gain power, opportunistically chose to wait in the wings to accuse the ruling United National Party of having betrayed the Sinhala Buddhists and ride back to power in case the APC decided to grant any concessions to the Tamils.

The APC commenced with an act of downright political chicanery on the parts of President Jayawardene when he scuttled 'Annexure C' (see box page 5) which he had co-authored with the Indian Special Envoy, Mr G. Parthasarathy. He disowned it no sooner he heard murmurs of protests from the Mathews within his party and Buddhist monks outside.

Annexure C provided for the establishment of regional councils in the predominantly Tamil populated

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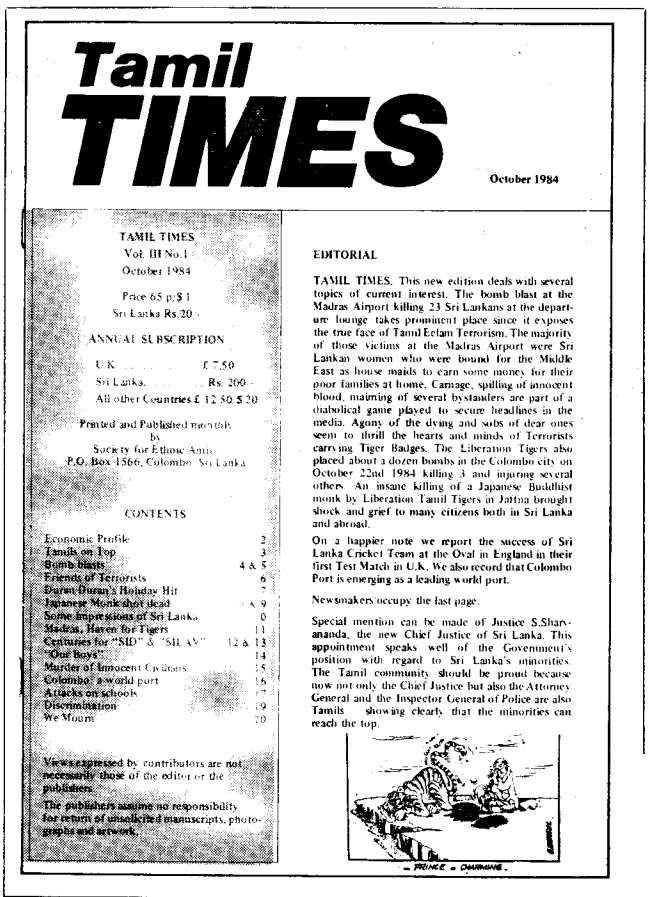

Tamil TIMES

October 1984

TAMIL TIMES
Vol. III No.1
October 1984

Price 65 p/$ 1
Sri Lanka Rs.20/-

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
U.K. ..... £ 7.50
Sri Lanka. ..... Rs. 200/-
All other Countries £ 12.50/$ 20

Printed and Published monthly by
Society for Ethnic Amity
P.O. Box 1566, Colombo, Sri Lanka

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EDITORIAL

TAMIL TIMES. This new edition deals with several topics of current interest. The bomb blast at the Madras Airport killing 23 Sri Lankans at the departure lounge takes prominent place since it exposes the true face of Tamil Eelam Terrorism. The majority of those victims at the Madras Airport were Sri Lankan women who were bound for the Middle East as house maids to earn some money for their poor families at home. Carnage, spilling of innocent blood, maiming of several bystanders are part of a diabolical game played to secure headlines in the media. Agony of the dying and sobs of dear ones seem to thrill the hearts and minds of Terrorists carrying Tiger Badges. The Liberation Tigers also placed about a dozen bombs in the Colombo city on October 22nd 1984 killing 3 and injuring several others. An insane killing of a Japanese Buddhist monk by Liberation Tamil Tigers in Jaffna brought shock and grief to many citizens both in Sri Lanka and abroad.

On a happier note we report the success of Sri Lanka Cricket Team at the Oval in England in their first Test Match in U.K. We also record that Colombo Port is emerging as a leading world port.

Newsmakers occupy the last page.

Special mention can be made of Justice S.Sharvananda, the new Chief Justice of Sri Lanka. This appointment speaks well of the Government's position with regard to Sri Lanka's minorities. The Tamil community should be proud because now not only the Chief Justice but also the Attorney General and the Inspector General of Police are also Tamils showing clearly that the minorities can reach the top.

GENUINE

FAKE

HOW LOW CAN THEY STOOP!

Tamil Times, London is absolutely astonished at the attempt to pass off another journal under the same name. We reproduce above the front pages of our October 1984 issue on the left, and of this new counterfeit on the right. Except for the address and the material it contains, the counterfeit is designed, as every crook intends, to confuse and deceive our wide readership.

Who is behind this forgery? The counterfeit 'Tamil Times' has been distributed through Sri Lankan missions abroad. For instance, in Australia, it was distributed by the Sri Lanka High Commission, in the same envelope as the 'Sri Lanka Newsletter'. It is clearly evident that the government of Sri Lanka is behind the distribution of this fake 'Tamil Times'.

The sham 'Tamil Times' is purported to be printed and published by the Society for Ethnic Amity, P.O. Box 1566, Colombo. 'Terrorist Review' which gives widely exaggerated accounts of 'terrorist' activities and publishes faked photographs of victims of 'terrorism' and which is prominently advertised in the government-controlled Lake House group of newspapers is also printed and published by the same organisation from the same P.O. Box address.

Our investigations have revealed that this Society for Ethnic Amity is nothing but a front with government backing to carry out anti-Tamil propaganda. It specialises in fabrications and forgeries, particularly for foreign consumption. P.O. Box 1566 in Colombo is the address from which 'Letters to the Editor' in the international media are normally planted. The printing press used and the culprits who manufacture these forgeries belong to a state-owned newspaper group which specialised in this type of activities even when it was under private ownership. Our moles in this newspaper group have confirmed that a glossy pamphlet of photographs, many of them faked, showing alleged atrocites by 'Tamil terrorists' and which is currently being distributed through Sri Lankan missions abroad, was also printed at this particular press. However, all left over copies of this pamphlet, including the artwork and plates, were ordered to be destroyed without trace.

Has the government of Sri Lanka become so bankrupt that it has to deceive people by counterfeiting Tamil Times in the manner it has done and publishing faked photographs?

○ **Former PM confirms Tamil killing:** The former Sri Lankan Prime Minister and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party leader, Mrs Sirima Bandanaraike, has charged that harmless and innocent Tamils were being killed or harassed in Sri Lanka in the name of combating terrorism. She added that while 'terrorists' got away the simple ordinary people suffered, particularly the Tamil youth who everywhere 'are treated as suspected terrorists'.

○ **Rest house blown up:** A rest house in the eastern Tamil province of Sri Lanka which was requisitioned under emergency powers by the army for its own use was blown up by Tamil militants on 1.2.85 by an explosion before the army could move in.

○ **Exchanged:** The 17 Indian fishermen captured by the Sri Lankan navy while fishing in the Palk Straits were exchanged for the Sri Lankan naval patrol boat, P-448, and its 7-man crew on January 29. The Indian fishermen alleged they were maltreated while they were in Sri Lanka's custody.

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FROM PAGE 1

INNOCENT TAMILS ARE BEING KILLED

the northern province of Jaffna, burning houses and shops and randomly shooting civilians because of attacks by Tamil guerrillas." ('International Herald Tribune', 14 August 1984)

Killings in August and September

'During August, Amnesty International received reports that several extrajudicial killings of Tamil civilians had taken place in Jaffna. One such killing was reported on 5 August, the killing of an Assistant-Superintendent of Police, and (after Tamil extremists reportedly attacked two state banks in the city), there were reports of such killings on 8 August and between 9–12 August 1984. Amnesty International also received allegations that ten such killings by army personnel on 13 August may have occurred at Kaithady, East of Jaffna. Amnesty International received further reports that two farmers had been shot dead on 19 August in a paddyfield near Poonakari. With regard to this last case, the government described the death as having occurred during an 'exchange of fire'. However, reports received by Amnesty International allege that the two men were shot dead without provocation.

'Amnesty International also received a report that a nightwatchman of the Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society at Thirukketheswaran near Mannar was arrested on 24 August and was shot dead while in army custody during the following day.

'During September Amnesty International received detailed reports that army personnel shot at random between six and ten Tamil civilians in the Point Pedro area, immediately after four policemen had been killed on 1 September 1984, when a landmine exploded at Tikkam, near Point Pedro. It has several accounts of survivors from these shootings.

'Amnesty International furthermore received allegations that, after nine soldiers were killed on 10 September 1984 by a mine explosion at Alampil, near Mullaitivu, army personnel fired indiscriminately at unarmed civilians in the area, as a result of which four persons were shot dead.

'The killing of the nine soldiers, reports from the area received by Amnesty International suggest, also led the following day, 11 September 1984, to the reprisal killings in a widely publicised incident near Vavuniya, when 16 among 46 passengers travelling in a private bus from Colombo to Jaffna were ordered to alight and after it had been ascertained that they were Tamils, were lined up and shot by men wearing khaki long trousers and shorts whom eyewitnesses stated they believed to be members of the armed services.

Killings in October-December

'During October and November Amnesty International received several allegations of further extrajudicial killings by services personnel, and is reviewing evidence of these as it becomes available.

'In December 1984 Amnesty International received a report alleging that, following an attack by members of Tamil extremist groups on Dollar and Kent farms on 30 November in the Mullaitivu district in which an estimated 65 Sinhalese civilians were believed killed, army personnel in civilian clothes went to Othiyamalai, a village near Kent and Dollar farms, took away 27 Tamils and shot them dead at the Rural Development Society apparently in reprisal for the previous day's attack. Amnesty International is awaiting further details of these alleged incidents.

Killings in Mannar — 4 December

'Allegations have recently reached Amnesty International of widespread killings in the Mannar area on 4 December by personnel of the security forces apparently in reprisal for the killing of a soldier when a landmine exploded near Murunkan, on the road from Mannar to Madawachchiya. The scale of these killings is unprecedented. It is alleged that at least 90 unarmed civilians, nearly all Tamils, many of them old men, women and children, were shot dead by men believed to be army personnel. They are among 102 civilians official sources said had been killed in the Mannar area on 4 December ('Guardian', 8 December 1984). Seventy-four bodies were reportedly collected by the former Member of Parliament of the area, Mr Soosaithasan, between the eighth and twelfth mile posts on the road from Mannar to Ahuradhapura. They were among a total of 90 bodies reportedly brought to Mannar and Murunkan Hospital.

'Initially, the government was reported on 5 December to have denied allegations made by residents in the area that soldiers went on the rampage and killed unarmed civilians, the government stating that a much smaller number were killed and that they were Tamil terrorists. The Minister of National Security was at that time quoted as saying 'at least 31 separatist guerrillas were killed in a battle with troops,' adding, 'it does happen sometimes in a shoot-out that innocent bystanders get killed.' ('International Herald Tribune', 6 December 1984) Two days later, on 7 December, the Minister of National Security was reported to have stated that 102 civilians, nearly all of them Tamils, were killed in the Mannar area on 4 December, while reportedly not contradicting allegations that most of the victims were innocent civilians.

'Amnesty International has now received details of a number of incidents alleged to have occurred in the Mannar area on 4 December 1984.

○ Army personnel are said to have entered the Murunkan Post Office and after separating from those present one man who was able to identify himself a Muslim, lined up the other ten persons present, all believed to be Tamils, and shot them. Four were reportedly shot on the spot, and six others, apparently left for dead, survived with serious wounds, among them the postmaster.

○ Army personnel are alleged to have stopped a Ceylon Transport Bus travelling from Murunkan to Vavuniya, and despite repeated pleas from the Sinhalese bus conductor, Kuda Dewage Jeyasena, not to harm the passengers in his charge, reportedly he was first shot dead, and 26 male passengers and the driver, a Muslim, were then lined up and killed. Among the dead were Mr Philip Kulendram, aged 55 years and Alexander Rajaratnam, aged 32 years.

○ In the village of Uthavayankulam, 16 civilians, reported to be farmers engaged in transplanting crops, are said to have been shot dead by security forces personnel at their homes. According to these reports, they were ordered to lie down face downwards and shot through the head. Two Sinhalese women, one elderly, were reportedly among the victims: Mrs A.R. Baby Nona aged 75 years, and Mrs Hemawathi Banda, 45 years.

○ In the village of Parappankandal, army personnel travelling in jeeps allegedly fired indiscriminately at villagers, killing 12 civilians. Among the dead is a young mother, Mrs John Baptist, nursing a young child, who survived despite having three toes shot off.

Names and ages of 76 men and women, many of them elderly whose names Amnesty International has thus far received identify them as victims of extrajudicial killings by security forces.'

The Amnesty Report also deals extensively with the continuing arbitrary arrest and detention of Tamils and their ill-treatment and torture.

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THE 'TIME' ARTICLE THAT WAS BANNED IN SRI LANKA

'A SCENE OUT OF HELL'

Just 37 years after Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain, the battle lines have been drawn between the country's 2.6 million Tamils, who are mostly Hindu, and its 11 million predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese. Although relations between the two ethnic groups have long been strained, the blood-letting began in earnest in July 1983 when hundreds of Tamils were killed in savage anti-Tamil rioting. Since then, the civil war has been steadily escalated. During December, more than 500 people, most of them innocent civilians, died in clashes or in acts of retaliation between government troops and Tamil guerrilla forces who are intent on establishing an independent state called Eelam in northern Sri Lanka. Last week, TIME New Delhi Bureau Chief Dean Brelis visited the strife-torn island. His report:

In the ancient north-central city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lankan army regulars are preparing the main line of defence against the Tamil guerrillas. By day, the atmosphere is relatively calm, and a smattering of tourists still come for lunch and a look at the Buddhist shrines, but most are too scared to spend the night. Says one hotel owner: 'We are becoming known as a land of terror and not of sunshine and pleasure.' Outside the city, the landscape begins to change dramatically. Government soldiers manning roadblocks nervously finger their Soviet-made AK-47 assault rifles. Further north along the western coast, past the city of Mannar, hundreds of acres of coconut and baobab trees have been burned to black stumps, reportedly by government soldiers denuding the land of natural cover so that the guerrillas will be easier to spot.

Reign of terror

Until December, the government was engaged in talks with the country's recognised political parties to find a peaceful resolution to the civil strife. When the negotiations broke down, the positions of hard-liners on both sides were strengthened. Some government officials are now talking about a quick military victory. Tamil militants say there is no solution but an independent state of their own. At Washington's invitation, President Junius Jayewardene last week sent National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali to the US to discuss the crisis. Washington has refused to grant major military assistance to an undisciplined Sri Lankan force that, by most accounts, is waging a reign of terror in the north and east of the country.

In the predominantly Tamil Jaffna Peninsula, at the northern tip of the island, the army has imposed a daily, dusk-to-dawn, shoot-on-sight curfew. Most private vehicles have been commandeered by government troops, and civilians must have a pass to move about even during the day. Young Tamil men are routinely rounded up and tortured. Each new ambush by the separatists has led to massive retaliation by the army. Thus far, 40,000 Tamil refugees have fled from Sri Lanka to the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Tamil militants say that at least an additional 20,000 refugees have entered India illegally. Young refugees are regularly recruited and sent back to fight with the Tamil guerrillas.

Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, the Sri Lankan Minister of National Security, claimed during his recent visit to the United States that Sri Lanka was a 'sister democracy' with a 'free press'. The circulation of the American TIME magazine of February 11 was banned under emergency laws by the Sri Lankan government because it contained the article which appears on this page by kind courtesy of TIME.

Priests gunned down

In the north, evidence of destruction by the military is everywhere. Temples and churches have been desecrated. In the past month, a Roman Catholic priest and a Methodist minister were gunned down by government forces. Residents say the worst savagery occurred in Mannar in December following the ambush of an army patrol by guerrillas. 'The soldiers began shooting at anyone they saw,' reports one eyewitness. 'People died like flies. The soldiers went out on the road, killing some people on the spot and taking others away. They went to the post office and made people line up before they shot them. Then they went looking for people in the paddy fields. No one was spared. It was a scene out of hell.' The massacre began at 11 in the morning and ended at 4.30 in the afternoon. When it was over, more than 150 people had been killed.

Father Hilary Joseph, vice president of the Mannar Citizens' Committee, confirms the details of the massacre. 'We are all in a terrible state of fright,' he says. 'We are all marked men.' Even some Sri Lankan military commanders acknowledge that the army had behaved disgracefully. Says an army officer: 'Because of this lack of discipline, we have lost the confidence and loyalty of the people. They hate and despise us.' A senior Western diplomat in the capital of Colombo dismisses the government's hopes of a military victory as wishful thinking. 'The army is losing in the north,' he says. 'It has no capability of winning a military victory against the separatists. They smell victory, and they have the Tamil people behind them.' There is talk in Colombo that junior army officers may try to stage a coup in an effort to form an even tougher anti-Tamil government.

Ban on fishing

The Jayewardene government has recently declared a ban on fishing in the waters around the northern peninsula, cutting off the livelihood of some 25,000 Sri Lankan fishermen. It has imposed a naval surveillance zone in the 22-mile Palk Strait between Sri Lanka and India, and ordered the Sri Lankan navy to shoot unidentified vessels on sight. The purpose: to prevent Tamils from fleeing to India across the strait and to put a stop to guerrillas and supplies coming back across. Even so, blockade runners make the nighttime journey for $60 a person, up from $10 before the blockade. The Sri Lankan patrolling has led to skirmishes with Indian fishermen and increased tensions with New Delhi. Last week, India returned the crew of a captured Sri Lankan gunboat, and Sri Lanka released 17 Indian fishermen whom it had captured and charged with poaching.

The militant Tamil separatists, currently divided into six different groups, are trying to unite under a single front. Their announced intention is to switch tactics from hit-and-run raids to a head-on battle with the army. From his sanctuary in the Indian city of Madras, a Tamil leader speaks confidently of victory in the decisive battle he says they will launch in the next three or four months 'at a place of our choosing and at a time of our choice'. Across the strait in Sri Lanka, another Tamil leader echoes his confidence. 'Our time is near,' he says.

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MISCELLANY

LALITH DRAWS A BLANK

In spite of the pro-US stance of the Jayewardene regime, the four-day visit of Lalith Athulathmudali, Sri Lanka's Minister of National Security, at the end of January was a disappointing one. His plea for military aid appears to have been summarily rejected by the US administration. Instead, the US Secretary of State, George Shultz, with whom Mr Athulathmudali had a 30-minute meeting, appears to have expressed dissatisfaction over the present state of ethnic violence in Sri Lanka and the failure of the All-Party talks, and strongly advised the government to actively seek a political solution using the good offices of India. Referring to the Minister's request for US arms, the American TIME (11.2.85) magazine reported, 'Washington has refused to grant major military assistance to an indisciplined Sri Lankan force that, by most accounts, is waging a reign of terror in the north and east of the country.'

Serious violations

It would appear that the National Security Minister spoke of Sri Lanka as a 'sister democracy' of the US, during his meeting with Mr Elliot Abrahams, the State Department's senior official in charge of human rights. The latter is reported to have raised the question of the serious violations of human rights in Sri Lanka and excesses committed by the security forces.

The frustrated Athulathmudali later told a press conference: 'I would like the US not to rush to believe one side or the other but to look at the matter independently.' He is also reported to have hinted that the US attitude was influenced by the Tamils living in the USA, who no doubt have carried on a sustained campaign to expose gross violations of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Despite the catalogue of atrocities committed by the security forces over the years and the failure of the Sri Lankan government to take effective measures to contain army excesses or prosecute soldiers who engage in frequent rampages against civilians, the Sri Lankan Minister claimed during an address to the Asia Society in Washington that his 'government was as sensitive as anybody else to allegations of military action on citizens. Such charges including cases not picked up by the international media were investigated by the civil police authority.'

JAYEWARDENE'S HYPOCRISY

India-phobia is a stock-in-trade for Sri Lanka's ruling politicians from President Jayewardene downwards. Anti-Tamil and anti-Indian sentiments find liberal expression at public meetings within the country and this helps to keep the ethnic pot at boiling point. Prime Minister Premadasa is one step ahead of all the others in his anti-Indian tirade. He challenges India to invade Sri Lanka while the working committee of the ruling UNP accuses India of 'de facto invasion' of Sri Lanka!

However, President Jayawardene is reported to have written a letter to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in early January. In this letter, Jayawardene is understood to have made warm references to India, describing it as his 'spiritual home'. He had made references to his attending the All India Congress Conference in Bombay in 1940 and his friendship with Jawaharlal Nehru and recalled that he (Jayawardene) was known as the Jawaharlal Nehru of the island!

'It is Jayawardene's characteristic hypocrisy. The references with nostalgia about his past association with India, the Congress and Nehru are evidently a bid to get closer to Rajiv', said a veteran Sri Lankan politician who spent several years in India during the Second World War.

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IDENTITY CARD FOR BUDDHA

Mr Vijaya Kumaranatunga, Secretary of the Sri Lanka Peoples Party, addressing the first anniversary of the founding of the party on January 29 in Colombo said: 'Fortunately, Buddha visited Lanka in the remote past. If he were to come here today, he would have been stopped on the way and asked to produce his identity card. Being an Indian, he would even run the risk of being hauled into remand custody. We are living in such chaotic times today.'

THE 'STATELESS' TAMILS PAY FOR LANKA'S ARMS

Who is paying for the current military build-up and the acquisition of a mass of modern weaponry by the Sri Lankan government to crush its minority Tamil population? The Tamils themselves! It may sound paradoxical, but it is true.

Michael Hamlyn writing in the TIMES (12.2.85) from Colombo states:

'The Sri Lankans have been lucky in at least one respect. The earnings from the cup that cheers have increased steadily during the past 12 months. As the import earnings increase the tax take has grown. The huge orders for patrol boats, armoured cars and helicopters from Britain, the guns and ammunition from China and the cargoes of war materials such as were held up in India at the weekend, are less of a drain on the country's balance of payments or on its budget deficit than they might otherwise be. Both volume and price of tea sales were very high in 1984. Sri Lanka sold 79 million kilograms of tea in 1983, and in 1984 sold 208 million. The average price in 1984 was 62 rupees (around £2), per kilogram. In 1983 it was 43 rupees, while in 1982 it was only 23 rupees.

Mainly as a result, the balance of payments had an overall surplus in 1984 of between $260 and $300 million. The overall surplus in 1983 was nil.'

The people who make this surplus possible are the Tamils working in the tea plantations in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. Besides the fact that they are the most poorly paid workers in the country, a million of them remain stateless, voteless and voiceless since 1948 when they were arbitrarily deprived of their nationality, citizenship and franchise.

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LANKA-ISRAELI CONNECTION DISAPPROVED

'Strong disapproval' of the permission given by the Sri Lanka government 'to establish a so-called Israeli Interests Section in the US Embassy in Colombo as well as its induction of Mossad and other questionable Israeli agencies into Sri Lanka' was expressed in a resolution adopted unanimously at the general meeting of the Afro-Asian Association of Sri Lanka on 30 January 1985.

Saying that 'this step has already estranged our friendly relations with the Arab world, created problems with our neighbours and endangered Asian security', the resolution also calls on the government to abandon this policy which 'casts doubts on the genuineness of Sri Lanka's hitherto continuous opposition to Israel's repeated aggression in the Middle East, its recognition of the PLO, and its support for the just struggle of the Arab people'.

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PUSHING TAMILS OFF THE LAND

By Amrit Wilson

A significant long-term policy is being implemented by the government. Popularly known as 'the Sinhalisation of Tamil areas', it involves both mass evictions and making people move to different areas around the rural regions of north and east Sri Lanka.

Losing their land is, of course, nothing new for peasants in Sri Lanka. In colonial times land was forcibly taken from them by the British for conversion into plantations. This continued in neo-colonial days. Between 1979 and 1982, in the guise of improving irrigation schemes through the massive Mahaweli development scheme, small farmers were robbed of their land which was sold at low prices to multinationals like British American Tobacco. More recently, peasants in the Monaragala area in the South have been threatened with eviction to make room for sugar multinationals like Booker International. But in the Tamil north and east of Sri Lanka the reasons for land grabbing by the state are more complex.

Sinhalese settlers

Here, Tamil peasants and the fisher people are losing their land and livelihood not to western multinationals but to Sinhalese settlers brought in from the south. In Vavuniya district, for example, Tamil plantation workers who had fled from racial violence in the south were resettled around the Dollar and Kent farms. About six months ago they were driven off these lands by the army as part of a government 'village expansion scheme'. The farms and surrounding areas were then settled with Sinhalese ex-convicts.

The churches, schools and co-operative stores which served the Dollar and Kent farms were taken over and used to provide accommodation for the army and jailguards who accompanied the convicts. Rapes and killings of Tamils in the surrounding areas became increasingly common. In December, both the Dollar and Kent farms were blown up in a daring military attack by LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), the biggest and most politically powerful of the Tamil liberation organisations. The attack was portrayed as a monstrous massacre of innocent civilians and, although explosives — not guns — had been used, pictures of women and children shot with their hands tied behind their backs were displayed as evidence ot atrocities.

Not only the army but government corporations nationalised under a previous government have been pulled into action to implement Sri Lanka's 'West Bank' solution. In Mannar district the government took over 4,000 acres of land from Tamil owners for the nationalised Cashew Corporation. Sinhalese labourers were brought from the south to work there. The corporation then declared that it could not run the enterprise profitably and divided the land up among the labourers.

West Bank replica

In the Vanni area — the coastal region of poverty-stricken fishing families and peasants — the criss-cross pattern of Sinhalese resettlement is perhaps most obvious. Government policy appears to be a replica of that suggested by the World Zionist Programme (for the West Bank from 1979-83) which says 'settlements must be carried out not only around the settlements of minorities but in between them'. And as on the Israeli-occupied West Bank the resettlements are now being accompanied by cultural 'discoveries'. A museum established in Vavuniya is full of statues of Buddha and remnants of Sinhalese and Buddhist civilisation 'unearthed' from Tamil villages all over Vanni. A senior civil servant who recently fled from Sri Lanka has said: 'It is astonishing that not a single villager or government officer, writer, historian, or even labourer was involved in or even aware of these items unearthed . . . in other words, they were bought or prepared and brought from outside to establish that Vanni was a Sinhalese area in history.'

Means of survival

Land is of course an emotional issue inextricable from a peasant people's traditions but in northern and eastern Sri Lanka it is first and foremost a means of survival. So while the demographic changes are being brought about to try and crush and control organised resistance, their very establishment has served to force people to fight back against the Sri Lankan state not merely in support of the liberation movements but for their own lives. That is perhaps why the Minister of Internal Security now effectively sees all Tamils as terrorists. 'Who is a terrorist' asks Athulathmudali? 'Is it the person who uses the gun? Or is a person who gives a house to another who has a gun and wants to kill also not a terrorist? He who watches the movement of the army and then goes and tells a terrorist: "do not go that way the army is around"; is he also not a terrorist?'

(By courtesy of NEW STATESMAN, 8.2.85)

'END OF THE NEGOTIATING ROAD'

Mr A. Amirthalingam, the leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), angrily rejected the accusation made by the Sri Lankan President that the collapse of the All Party Conference was due to the rejection by the TULF of the proposals submitted by the President.

The TULF was responding to an interview with President Junius Jayawardene published in the American magazine Newsweek in which the President not only attempted to cover up the fact that the APC collapsed under the mounting pressure from extremist sections of his own party and the Buddhist clergy, but also ruled out any more 'talks' with the TULF unless 'they give up their call for a separate Tamil state'.

In a press interview, Mr Amirthalingam said that Mr Jayewardene was harking back to his old stand of July 1983 when he declared that he would not negotiate with the TULF until it abandoned the demand for a separate Tamil state. It betrayed a total lack of sincerity on the part of the Sri Lankan government, Mr Amirthalingam added.

The TULF leader drew attention to the fact that Mr Jayewardene had twice jettisoned certain proposals which he himself had previously initiated because of pressure from Sinhala extremists. The first occasion was when he dropped the 'Annexure C' proposals which provided for regional autonomy to which he agreed in November 1983. Secondly, 'after a great deal of groping about', he himself formulated certain proposals for Provincial Councils and a Second Chamber and tabled two Draft bills before the APC which he had later dropped, not because of TULF's objection (about which the government knew already), but owing to the opposi-

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SRI LANKA ARMY ACCUSED OF MASSACRE

IN THE JUNGLE

News of another jungle massacre carried out by the armed forces in northern Sri Lanka is being circulated in the coastal town of Mannar.

According to the heavily censored press, which has to rely exclusively on government hand-outs for news of activities by both Tamil separatist guerrillas and security forces, a raid on a jungle camp during an operation around a number of villages in Mannar district 12 days ago resulted in the death of seven guerrillas and the capture of a considerable amount of military equipment.

According to people who were there, the reality was quite different. Distraught villagers said no guerrillas were in the villages, that none were shot and no military equipment was seized. They said instead that 32 innocent men were shot in cold blood, often in front of their wives and children.

The people of Mannar, a sparsely inhabited agricultural region just south of the Jaffna peninsula, said they had been unable to get out news about the massacre because they had been virtually isolated from the rest of the country.

Widows tell story

Two women widowed in the massacre told me their story when I visited a community centre in the district. They were anxious that I should not give their names, for fear of reprisals, and the same fear afflicted my interpreter.

Mrs S, aged 40, has three daughters, almost grown up, and an eight-year-old son. She came originally from Batticaloa, on the east coast.

Mrs T, aged 28, a Tamil of Indian origin, moved from the hill country, first to Vavuniya, and later to Mannar.

Both their husbands had been landless labourers working for day-wages on other people's fields. They both lived in isolated *cadjan* huts, little more than sheds with dirty floors, built out of thatch, in the village of Vattakandal. 'We were awakened,' Mrs S said, 'at about five o'clock, by people shouting for the houseowners to come out. We don't actually own the house, but my husband came out anyway.

Shot in the head

'Six soldiers were there. When I followed him out they asked for his identity card, so I went back inside for it. When I came out one of them took it, and another shot him in the head.' She pointed to her temple. Two of them took the body away to a jeep while the other asked for paraffin. They doused the thatch and set it on fire.

Mrs T's experience was similar. Just before dawn, five soldiers called for them to come out. 'I and two of my girls came out.' she said. She left her husband still asleep on his mat, and a third child indoors. 'They asked me if there were any men inside, so I said "Yes". They went in and shot him as he lay there on his mat.' She pointed to the centre of her forehead.

While the soldiers were pulling out her husband's body and setting the hut on fire, she and her three girls ran away in the jungle. 'They looked like devils', she said.

Mrs S did not run. 'Because of fear, I didn't do anything.'

According to the Mannar Citizens Committee, an organisation which includes lawyers, Christian priests, shopkeeps, Muslim officials, and others, and which is drawing up a letter to President Jayewardene giving details of the massacre, the soldiers also called at the village school, rousing out of their quarters the principal and his two assistants. All three were shot dead.

One man told me that their hands were tied behind them before they were shot. After the killings, the army released seven bodies to the local mortuary. The villagers found and buried another four in the fields. 'We estimate that 32 people were killed,' a member of the citizens' committee said. But we think the army has disposed of the other 20.'

Army takes bodies away

The committee points out that the army now takes away the bodies of those it kills. After a massacre at the end of last year, the security forces made the mistake of not taking the bodies away, leaving them in the fields and at the roadsides, where they could be counted. The army has still not heard the last of it.

The local population theorises that the armed forces received information from somewhere that Tamil militants were hiding in the jungle near the villages, and that the raid was carried out in the first place to find them, and secondly to terrorise the inhabitants into refusing to give the guerrillas support in the future.

'How could we have fed the terrorists?' Mrs S asked plaintively. 'We don't have enough to feed ourselves.'

(By courtesy of THE TIMES, 11.2.85)

— TULF leader

tion from the Buddhist clergy and Sinhala chauvinists.

Mr Amirthalingam added: 'I think we have come to the end of the road as far as negotiations go. The Sri Lanka government is interested only in a military solution of crushing the Tamil people and destroying them altogether.'

Close our ranks

'We are left with no option but to close our ranks and to meet this threat of total destruction of Tamils by our own united efforts and with the help of our friends. We expect that India will do all that is possible to stop these killings of innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka.'

Commenting on the remarks by the Sri Lankan Minister of National Security Mr Lalith Athulathmudali that 'no one need teach them how to solve this ethnic problem', the TULF leader said: 'We have to tell Mr Lalith Athulathmudali that for the last eight years, the Sri Lankan government has not only failed to solve the problem but also aggravated it to the stage of a virtual civil war in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it becomes absolutely necessary that friendly countries like India should take action to stop the decimation of the minority Tamil population.'

Pointing to Mr Jayewardene's admission in the Newsweek interview that the Sri Lanka army had massacred innocent Tamils, the TULF General Secretary said that Jayewardene's merely admitting the obvious fact did not absolve him of the responsibility for these killings. It was clear that neither he nor his government was prepared to do anything to stop the killing of innocent Tamils but were, in fact, encouraging the armed forces to do so.

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BRITISH MPs AGAINST CREDIT FOR GUNBOATS

Several British parliamentarians have expressed their intention to protest against British government export credits to the Sri Lankan government for its proposed purchase of several high-speed gunboats in the UK.

Reliable sources indicate that the Sri Lankan government has already placed an order for 10 high-speed gunboats with Cougar Holdings, a Southampton-based company which manufactures fast patrol boats. They are said to be fitted with 12.7 mm guns and would normally take a crew of six but are to be adapted to take eight.

In addition to the gunboats, the Sri Lankan government also has placed orders for armoured cars such as the Saladin, which is used in Northern Ireland, self-loading rifles and grenades and helicopter gunships for the air force.

The Sri Lankan government's effort at this arms build-up coincides with its current military offensive against the Tamil minority which is engaged in a bitter struggle against Sinhala domination and brutality.

Many British MPs are questioning the grant of £20 million worth of export assistance by the British government, particularly in the context of the reported atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan security forces against civilian Tamils. They are also perturbed at their government's readiness to assist President Jayewardene's government when it is noted that the US administration would appear to be reluctant to respond to Sri Lanka's request for massive military assistance.

● Two British MPs, Mr Kilroy Silk (Labour) and Mr Roger Sims (Conservative) left for Sri Lanka during the second week of February as delegates of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group to investigate allegations of gross violations of human rights.

● Meanwhile, there is growing opposition to the proposed visit by British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, to Sri Lanka in April this year to inaugurate the Victoria Dam funded by an outright gift of £110 million from Britain. Many parliamentarians, academics and human rights activists regard her visit as putting the seal of approval on a regime which has been repeatedly found guilty of gross violation of human rights.

Footnote: 70 British MPs have tabled a motion on 31 January which reads as follows: 'That this House expresses extreme concern at reports of the extensive and calculated terror being unleashed by the Sri Lankan armed forces on the Tamil civilians in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka; is appalled by the failure of the Government to maintain the basic facilities of food distribution, transport, health, and the well-being of individuals; registers strongest protest at the denial of basic democratic and human rights to the Tamil people; and demands that Her Majesty's Government calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to put an end to the arbitrary arrest and military repression of the Tamil people, to release all Tamils and political prisoners, to despatch immediate relief to the 200,000 fishermen and their dependants who have been prohibited from fishing and who face starvation.

TAMILS HIT BY SCORCHED-EARTH BLITZ

Long stretches of the narrow island of Mannar look like Vietnam did 15 years ago, after defoliation by American napalm. Many groves of palmyrah and coconut palm lie black and charred; others have been attacked with saws and cleared.

The Sri Lanka government claims that the palm forests are routinely cleared this way every year. But the civilians of Mannar say that the Sri Lankan army, engaged in a harsh and often arbitrary campaign of terror here in the north, is bent on transforming all of the island into a huge sand dune so that it can establish a defence frontline and deprive 'the boys' — the Tamil terrorists — of cover.

Mannar is 22 miles from India where six Tamil separatist groups have established training camps. Hope is in short supply on the island especially in the predominantly Tamil north, as the battle between 'the boys' and the ill-disciplined army slides into civil war. Civilians live in constant fear: more than 160 have been killed in Mannar district by rampaging security forces since December 4.

As the excesses of the largely Sinhalese army continue, the lines between the community which it represents — the 75 per cent of the island's population who are Buddhist Sinhalese — and the 20 per cent who are Hindu or Christian Tamils, appear irrevocably drawn.

Every village on the way to Mannar has burned-out homes and shops. A hospital lay in ruins. Nervous, arrogant soldiers dragged passengers from trucks and buses in their search for weapons.

The army in the Tamil north now numbers 3,600 men, but they are ill-trained and ill-equipped. 'The authority of the army is confined to the frontiers of our camps,' Brigadier Salin Seneviratne, an ex-Sandhurst man who commands in Jaffna, told his superiors in a confidential memorandum last month.

'We are despised'

'We are despised here,' one of the northern commanders told me. 'We just cannot cope with the situation. Every week soldiers go amok. I've literally had to slap men from the ranks, and lock up large numbers to prevent them going on a rampage.'

The tiny market place of Mannar city is testament to the soldiers' presence. Barricades, barbed-wire fences and burned-out oil drums litter the centre of the market, which soldiers razed to the ground in August after Tamil separatists ambushed an army convoy 30 miles away.

'Everyone lives in dread here,' said Hilary Joseph, a Roman Catholic priest. 'No one sleeps at home at night. They are all in the jungle. Two priests have been killed by the army since the end of December. There is a regular priest hunt.'

We saw evidence of the massacre of December 4 all around us. It began early in the morning when three army jeeps hit a landmine. One soldier was killed and three were injured. Thirty soldiers then went on a six-hour rampage around Mannar.

They attacked the central hospital, stopped vehicles and shot the occupants dead on the spot. They lined up 15 employees of a post office and killed eight. They opened fire on peasants in fields, attacked a convent and stripped nuns of watches, gold crucifixes and chains. At the end, nearly 150 people lay dead; 20 are still missing, mostly young male Tamils taken to army camps.

'It took three days just to transport all the bodies,' one social worker said. 'There is no longer any petrol, no longer any movement. Life is dying here.'

At Talaimannar about 250 fishing boats were tied up by 11 in the morning, their working day ended. Two months ago, the Sri Lankan government imposed a naval 'surveillance' zone off the northern coast which limited fishing to close inshore. The result is a catch of minnows — and destitution for 1,200 fishing families.

Nobody has been permitted to leave the village since November, and we were the first visitors allowed in. 'We are living in a state of siege,' said one fisherman. 'But it doesn't matter. We will do whatever is necessary to continue to help the boys.'

By kind courtesy of THE SUNDAY TIMES, 27.1.85.

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FROM PAGE THREE

Bangladesh struggle for independence, when refugees fleeing the Pakistani army flooded into India. India eventually intervened militarily on the Bangladeshis' side.

The fact that the Tamils are leaving Sri Lanka is significant. About half the Tamil population of the island lived outside the traditional Tamil homelands in the north and east of the country, and previous bouts of intercommunal trouble — a regular occurrence in recent years, culminating in the appalling spasm of killing and burning in July 1983 — have led to a flood of refugees arriving in the north.

'We came north to avoid being killed by our neighbours in the south,' one refugee told me. 'Now where can we go to avoid being killed by the army here!'

Although many Tamils have returned to the south, to the jobs and property they abandoned in 1983, many are still deeply insecure there. Burned-out shops still gape blindly at the street in southern towns. The exodus of educated and intelligent young Tamils from the professions and from management positions is having a noticeable effect on the country's business.

Whenever I have spoken to the ministers in charge of the military operations — President Jayewardene and the Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali — both have admitted military excesses but say the army is beginning to behave in a more disciplined fashion.

Mr Athulathmudali likes to compare the behaviour of his soldiers with that of the British army in Londonderry or the Americans in Vietnam. But Bloody Sunday was a long time ago, with fewer than a tenth of Sri Lanka's casualties in the past three months. As for Vietnam, that was lost partly because of the excesses of the occupying army against the local population. It seems the same is happening in Sri Lanka. While trying to generate sufficient terror among the Tamils to prevent them giving shelter to the militant rebels, the armed forces are driving them to consider themselves as aliens.

It may be possible, given a just political solution to Sri Lanka's dreadful ethnic problem, to reverse the de facto separation of the country now being institutionalised. But until the excesses of the armed forces can be curbed – and there is little sign of that, despite the official assurances – that seems unlikely.

'A lot of people here are now afraid to sleep in their homes,' said one northern worthy, 'so they take their mats and bedrolls into the jungle. Of course, there they may be taken for terrorists and shot. But they prefer to take that risk. You are shot if you stay at home, you're shot if you go out. You are shot if you run when challenged, you are shot if you stand still. What can we do?'

By courtesy of THE TIMES, 18.2.85

DON'T RETURN TAMILS TO SRI LANKA

The Amnesty International has requested all governments not to send back to Sri Lanka members of the Tamil minority seeking political asylum, or not wishing to return to their own country. This request has been reiterated in AI's latest Report released last month.

If returned against their will, the AI Report states, all members of the Tamil minority have reasonable grounds to fear,

'1. that they may fall victim to arbitrary killings by members of the security forces; especially in view of reports of continuing and increasingly widespread shootings of unarmed members of the Tamil civilian population by members of the security forces apparently in reprisal for attacks on members of these forces by Tamil extremist groups.

'2. that they may be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention — particularly if they are men between 15-30 years old — and possibly be held *incommunicado*, with their relatives remaining unaware of their whereabouts for weeks and sometimes months after arrest;

'3. that after arrest they may be subjected to ill-treatment and torture if the security forces believe that they have any knowledge of the activities of Tamil extremist groups.

'It has been difficult to obtain information about the danger that Tamils who have sought asylum abroad may face immediate arrest on return to Sri Lanka.

'According to a report in a Tamil paper 'Virakesari', of 5 October 1984, the Minister of National Security is reported to have stated in a reply to the question relating to the decision in Switzerland to send back the 1,600 Tamil refugees and whether they would be arrested on arrival, "if there is a reason to arrest, they will be arrested".

'So far, Amnesty International knows of several cases in which such arrests have reportedly been made. One recent case concerns a young Tamil, who had sought political asylumn in France reportedly on grounds that he had been active in the Tamil movement while at University and was sought by the police, was arrested on return to Sri Lanka on 29 September 1984 ('Le Monde', 12 October 1984). Amnesty International has received a report that he was subsequently detained for an unspecified period, and is at present investigating reports that he may have been released.

Remained in detention

'Another Tamil who had reportedly sought political asylum in Switzerland apparently remained in detention for more than twelve months without any charges being brought against him. According to a report in the 'Sun', Colombo, 14 December 1984: 'An asylum-seeking Tamil who was arrested by the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) at Katunayake International Airport — when he was on his way home after being deported by the Swiss government was released by Fort magistrate S.I. Imam, when CID failed to file plaints against him, over twelve months after his arrest.

'The suspect is a resident of Kokuvil, Jaffna.

'He was arrested by the CID at the Katunayake International Airport on October 3, 1983, produced in court and remanded. The CID asked for a further date but the magistrate observed that the CID had been given a final date earlier and had failed to file plaints.'

BISHOP'S APPEAL ON MASS ARRESTS

The following is the text of a letter sent by the Rt. Rev. Dr B. Deogupillai, Bishop of Jaffna, to President Jayewardene on December 31st 1984 on the arrest of innocent Tamil youths.

'At the request of three very high-ranking police officers and the government authorities of the north, I made an earnest appeal on 26th December for the unconditional release of the police officers, Mr Terence de Silva and Mr J.A.R. Nanayakkara, on humanitarian grounds. I trust my appeal has helped to preserve their lives till now.

'Now, at the request of the wailing mothers of the North and the Esst, I earnestly appeal to you, on the same humanitarian grounds to release immediately the hundreds of innocent Tamil youths who have been unjustly arrested and are being detained in military camps in the North, East and South.

'Further, I earnestly appeal to you to see that the practice of **indiscriminate mass arrest of Tamil youths** in the North and the East by the armed forces is forthwith discontinued.

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POST INDEPENDENCE POLITICS IN SRI LANKA

By Dr Nihal Jayawickrema

An examination of post-Independence politics in Sri Lanka must necessarily begin with, and be made against the background of, the constitutional settlement of 1946 which was the basis upon which Independence was negotiated and eventually granted. That settlement was incorporated in the Independence Constitution of 1946. For the purpose of today's discussion, it may be sufficient if we take note of two important features of that Constitution. The first is that it visualised a multi-party parliamentary democracy for Sri Lanka. The second is that it was claimed to have entrenched 'all the protective provisions for minorities that the wit of man could devise'. That was the pre-Independence dream. What post-Independence politics has achieved is to rob nearly every possibility of giving that dream reality and substance.

A multi-party democracy requires at least three important components: (1) An executive that is elected periodically; (2) A legislature in which organised dissent is permitted; and (3) A judiciary that is independent.

For our purposes this morning, I will pick out for discussion one of them; namely, the element of dissent. Dissent, in the context of a multi-party parliamentary democracy, means an organised political group or groups whose aim is to oust the government in power and to replace it by one of its own. To the extent that such an Opposition is tolerated, protected, and even encouraged by the Government, one political system may be distinguished from another.

A serious problem

In the first two or three years of Independent Sri Lanka, the Marxist parties which comprised the Opposition — the LSSP, BLP and CP — had a serious problem of their own. Not having participated in the negotiations or in the constitutional settlement that preceded Independence, for the reason that they were incarcerated during that period, they refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Constitution, and therefore declined to conform to its scheme. But mid-1950 saw the election of Dr N.M. Perera as the first leader of His Majesty's Opposition, and 1952 saw the Opposition assume a new dimension with the absorption of a more centrist element through the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

Within four years, the vibrancy of Sri Lanka's parliamentary democracy was vividly demonstrated when it became possible for the Opposition to channel through the parliamentary system a multitude of dissenting forces who, in another country, under another system, might well have exploded in violent revolution. When, in April 1956, Sir John Kotelawela stepped down from his heights of power and glory and bowed to the wishes of the people, he helped to establish that consensus between Government and Opposition which is fundamental to a parliamentary democracy.

1956 highwater mark

If Sri Lanka politics reached its high-water mark in 1956, its descent can be said to have begun barely two years later, in June 1958, when the Government, acting under the Public Security Ordinance, ostensibly for the purpose of diffusing the communal violence which had erupted in the previous month, proscribed the Federal Party and the Jatika Vimukti Peramuna, and arrested the Members of Parliament belonging to those two parties.

The fact that the period of proscription and detention coincided with the time it took for the Government to push through both Houses of Parliament the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Bill makes the conclusion almost irresistable that what the Government was actually seeking to do was to immobilise the more truculent Opposition in order to secure the expeditious passage of a controversial legislative measure.

Habits are easily formed in this country, and over the years thereafter we have seen not only the repeated proscription of the Federal Party, but the virtual outlawing of the TULF by the Sixth Amendment of August 1983 and the proscription of the LSSP, CP and JVP under emergency regulations made in that same month. The Government has, therefore, assumed the right to prohibit organised dissent whenever it considers it expedient to do so. A working rule of a multi-party parliamentary democracy has been breached.

The freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly, outside Parliament, is as important for the Opposition as the freedom of activity within the legislative chamber. The mid-seventies saw the use of emergency regulations to ban meetings organised by the UNP, and the utilisation of inanimate objects to halt the progress of Opposition demonstrations. By the late seventies, actual physical force had begun to be used to disperse SLFP meetings held in public places.

Today the organised expression of dissent in public, if at all allowed, is no less hazardous an enterprise as that undertaken in days gone by by Portuguese armies setting out to capture the impregnable kingdom of Kandy. The more peaceful expression of views by the Opposition received its first jolt in 1967 when the UNP Government ordered the closure of the LSSP-controlled 'Jana Dina' daily newspaper for no more serious a misdemeanour than that it had published what was alleged to have been an exaggerated report of a private social function which the then Prime Minister had attended. The CP-controlled 'Aththa' newspaper, which threatened to expose corruption in high places, was threatened with a similar fate.

For three years, from 1974-1977, the SLFP Government kept sealed up the presses of the only national group of newspapers supporting the UNP at that time. The ostensible reason was that that newspaper group was discouraging people from cultivating a particular subsidiary crop. Today, dissent is expressed in print only through the good grace of the Government's own Competent Authority. A second working rule has been broken.

Organised dissent seeks fulfilment at periodic general elections. Therefore, despite the activities to which I have referred, most of which happened in the years intervening between general elections, the fact that general elections were regularly held, and the fact that at these general elections the government in office was always voted out, may be regarded by some as evidence of a continuing consensus in Sri Lankan politics; a consensus which makes it possible for a multi-party parliamentary democracy to work.

End of consensus

If that be so, the utilisation by the incumbent President of his parliamentary majority to expel from Parliament the duly elected leader of the leading Opposition party, and to disqualify and thereby prevent his principal opponent from challenging his re-election when his lawful term came to an end, must surely mark at least

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the beginning of the end of any consensus which might previously have existed.

If that alone was not sufficient, the occupation by the Government of the headquarters of the principal Opposition party; the seizure of its membership registers and books of account; the detention of its chief office-bearers; the closure of its regular printing establishments; followed by a referendum, held amidst scenes of unprecedented intimidation and violence and disregard for the law by law enforcement officers themselves, at which a record affirmative vote of 38 per cent of the total electorate was regarded as sufficient authority to maintain in the legislature a 5-6 majority of the ruling party for a further period of six years, would surely have laid to rest, finally and very definitely, whatever remained of that consensus.

Therefore, thirty-six years of post-Independence politics has now given birth to the All-Party Conference. An attempt is being made to shift the centre of decision-making from Parliament, which as at present constituted appears to have lost much of its relevance to a new and novel institution, in which not only political parties, but also social and religious interest groups could participate in finding solutions to national problems.

Substitution for general election

Whether this experiment would succeed; whether a referendum could be a substitute for a general election; whether an All-Party Conference can be a viable alternative to an elected Parliament; whether a Government can continue to govern in the absence of a consensus with the forces of dissent; whether a parliamentary democracy can function when the rules of the game have been broken; indeed, whether national problems can ever be solved except on the basis of trust, good faith and mutual respect between and among all the competing forces in a country; are questions to which all of us ought to direct our attention before time runs out. And time appears to have begun running out for tha most critical of all national problems today — the ethnic problem.

The dream of communal amity was rudely disturbed even earlier than the dream of a multi-party parliamentary democracy. Indeed, an examination of the progressive escalation of communal conflict in Sri Lanka may well be a case-study of the failure of post-Independence political leadership in this county.

D.S. Senanayake probably believed that with Section 29 in the Constitution, and the elected representatives of Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya in his Cabinet, the process of nation-building would be well on its way. But neither the Colombo-based elitist representatives of the Tamil community, nor Section 29 of the Constitution could withstand the onward march of Sinhala nationalism.

Legitimate aspirations

And the tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that while successive Sinhala governments were willing and able to be receptive to Sinhala aspirations, they consistently failed to respond to the equally legitimate aspirations of the Tamil speaking people, particularly of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. What this ethnic minority asked for was the right to manage its own affairs in those parts of the country in which they had been tradtionally settled, and the right to do so in its own language. Apart from that, the Tamil community asked to be treated as equal citizens with the Sinhalese in the one country to which they all belonged. That these were legitimate demands, and were so regarded by the Sinhala political leadership, has never been in doubt. But what was, and still is, seriously in doubt, was the sincerity of the assurances held out to them by a succession of our national leaders.

In 1955, Sir John Kotelawela emphatically declared on the island of Delft that a law would be enacted to make Sinhala and Tamil the official languages of Ceylon. Six months later, on the hallowed ground of Kelaniya, the UNP declared equally emphatically that Sinhala alone should be the official language of the country.

1957 Bandaranaike pact

In 1957, Mr S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike signed a pact with the Tamil political leadership, under which he promised to establish Regional Councils and provide for the use of Tamil in the northern and eastern provinces. Nine months later, under pressure from the Eksath Bhikku Peramuna, and from the UNP led by Mr J.R. Jayewardene, which organised a 72-mile march from Colombo to the Temple of the Tooth 'to save the Sinhala race', he announced that the pact which bore his signature as Prime Minister was incapable of being implemented.

In 1958, Mr Bandaranaike enacted the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act, but failed in his lifetime to make the regulations which would have made that law operative. When in 1966, Mr Dudley Senanayake attempted to make those regulations, the Opposition parties led by Mrs Bandaranaike demonstrated against that move on Viharamahadevi Park and on the streets of Colombo. Mr Dudley Senanayake, fortified by the state emergency, proceeded to make the regulations, but did not implement them in the remaining four years of his government.

In 1965, Mr Dudley Senanayake signed an agreement with Mr Chelvanayakam, in which he promised to establish District Councils. A Bill for this purpose was prepared, but was never introduced in Parliament. Meanwhile, a White Paper on the subject, promising less than what Mr S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had offered in 1957, was publicly and ceremonially burnt on the steps of Parliament building by members of the SLFP and the other Opposition parties.

In 1970, Mrs Bandaranaike invited the Federal Party members to the Constituent Assembly to help draft a new Constitution which would 'serve to build a nation ever more strongly conscious of its oneness amidst the diversity imposed on it by history'. When they responded and suggested that that goal be reached through Federalism, they were ruled out of order and left with no alternative but to withdraw from the exercise.

Promise conveniently forgotten

In 1977, the UNP Manifesto promised to summon an All-Party Conference to consider the problems of non-Sinhala speaking people, but conveniently forgot that promise once the general election was won, and it took several years of terrorist activity and military reprisals, hundreds of deaths, the burning of a public library, and the events of July 1983, to convince the Government that that promise ought to be kept. But when that All-Party Conference eventually met, the much-maligned Annexure C, which the Tamil political leadership claimed contained the agenda they had been invited to discuss, continued to lie on the table in the manner of an illegitimate child abandoned by its mother.

That, in brief and in outline, is a case study of the failure of political leadership. Multiply it a dozen times, and you will have before you the history of post-Independence politics in Sri Lanka.

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DECEMBER 9, 1984

☐ Sinhalese fishermen, newly settled in a village near Mullaitivu and carrying government supplied arms and ammunition contributed their share to the bloodletting by massacring 18 Tamil fishermen.

DECEMBER 10, 1984

☐ The 42-hour curfew has ended and a 61-hour curfew has been clamped down with only a 12-hour respite in between.

DECEMBER 11, 1984

☐ The so-called Sinhalese civilians armed by the government brutally murdered 65 Tamil civilians at Madawachchiya. Tamil men were shot and burnt by the roadside or their corpses were hung from trees, while women were raped at gunpoint and then butchered.

☐ Stringent government regulations and blockade of famine proportions in the Jaffna district. 900,000 Tamils are on the brink of starvation. The entire Northern Province is a de facto concentration camp, with the whole population incarcerated by a 103-hour curfew interrupted only by a 12-hour break. Seven deaths have been reported following starvation.

DECEMBER 12, 1984

☐ Rear Admiral Perera, Director of REPIA (Rehabilitation of Property and Industries Authority — a body appointed in the wake of the destruction of property in the July 1983 pogrom) was on the field today at Periyakatru in the Mannar district watching army men on a demolition spree burning down 30 houses and 10 shops! The property demolished was that of a refugee settlement attached to the church which had housed Tamil workers from the plantations who were driven away from their estates during the pogroms of 1977 and 1981!! REPIA in action!!

DECEMBER 13, 1984

☐ Rev. G.N. Jeyarajasingham, a Tamil Methodist priest, Abdul Cader Sulaiman, a Muslim chauffeur, and Jesuthason Roche, a Tamil police constable, were shot by soldiers between Mannar and Murunkan and burnt with the vehicle in which they were travelling.

☐ A large number of Tamil girls, mainly student candidates appearing for the GCE examinations, have been arrested by the security forces and detained under the PTA. At an examination centre at Akkaraipattru in the Eastern Province 26 female students were arrested and held under the PTA. All these female detainees have been confined to male custody.

☐ Army men shot dead and then burnt six innocent Tamil civilians at the village of Mullikulam in the Mannar district.

☐ At Tinnevely in the Jaffna district, a young mother, Kalavani (24 years) who had given birth to a child less than two weeks ago, was raped by a Sinhalese soldier at gun point. Not to be outdone by this 'glorious achievement' another soldier displayed his priapic prowess by raping a pregnant woman at gun point. A third soldier raped an unmarried girl. All this happened at Tinnevely. Another Tamil girl arrested at Mullaitivu and taken to Batticaloa by the troops was raped and killed. Several Tamil girls among the detainees at the Boosa (South Sri Lanka) concentration camp are also reported to have been raped by security forces.

DECEMBER 15, 1984

☐ According to a reasonably modest estimate, over the last two weeks, about 4,000 mothers have lost their children — Tamil youths, who have been snatched away by the Sinhalese soldiers and are held in concentration camps. Out of them, several hundreds have been sent to Colombo by ship and rail. Today around 400 have been despatched to Colombo by ship. It is very difficult to compile a list of the 4,000 youths just now, with the current state of chaos and panedemonium with everyone running for their lives. At least 150 Tamil civilians have been shot dead by the soldiers during curfew hours in the Jaffna district.

☐ The normally docile community of doctors from the Jaffna Hospital and the Jaffna Medical College are preparing a pungent letter of protest to President Jayewardene pointing out the utter chaos at the Jaffna Hospital due to the emergency regulations. Lack of all drugs including paracetamol, lack of food for the hospital patients (no permits issued to doctors to use their cars; breakdown of hospital vehicles; petrol not available), lack of transport for nursing and attending staff to report for work and the resultant deaths of patients in hospital are among the things pointed out. The concluding paragraph of this letter drives home the macabre truth about the grotesque crimes the Sinhalese regime is committing away from the eyes of the world: 'Human life is precious. We, who cure at times, comfort many times and relieve pain at all times, of the sick, appeal that the sick should be cared for always, and not allowed to die without treatment, in any country, developing or developed, and even under conditions of war.'

DECEMBER 18, 1984

☐ Over 2,000 Tamils between the ages of 15 and 35 were rounded up by the security forces in Jaffna and transported to various army camps.

☐ 26 Tamil girls sitting the GCE (OL) examination were taken into custody from Akkaraipathu in the eastern province by the security forces.

☐ Over 25,000 Tamil refugees in the Puttalam area in the west coast were undergoing severe hardship without any relief.

DECEMBER 19, 1984

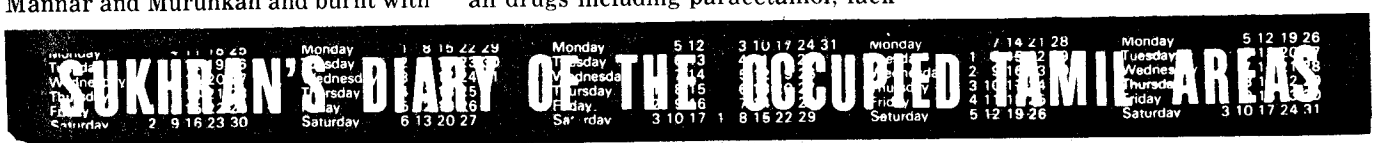
☐ Nearly 750 Tamils were taken into custody by the security forces in the Jaffna district where 'combing operations' were intensified with the introduction of thousands of troops.

☐ Army personnel together with some Sinhalese goons set fire to several houses in Cettikulam, Asikulam and Thatchankulam in the northern province. Over 140 families took refuge in churches and schools.

DECEMBER 20, 1984

☐ Out of the nearly 2,500 Tamils rounded up during the last two days and interrogated in the army camp at Jaffna stadium, nearly 1,000 were released. Many reported ill-treatment.

☐ At Kaddaparachchan, two Tamil youths, one an undergraduate, were shot and killed and their bodies paraded in an open army vehicle accompanied by singing and dancing by army personnel. They threatened that a similiar fate would befall others.



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DECEMBER 21, 1984

☐ Displaced tea plantation Tamils resettled in Kandasamy, Nagar and Periyakadu in the Mannar district, were attacked and chased away by security forces and Sinhala goons. Thirteen houses at Kandasamy Nagar and 15 houses at Periyakadu were set alight and destroyed.

☐ At Thiriyai, following the attack by a gang of army personnel and a group of armed Sinhalese, several houses were burnt and destroyed and nine bodies were traced. The entire village population has taken refuge in neighbouring villages and jungles.

DECEMBER 22-24, 1984

☐ At Tambalakamam in the Trincomalee district, 18 Tamil persons were arrested and taken to Anuradhapura. Seven Tamils were shot and killed by the army in Moothur in the Trincomalee district.

☐ Tamil passengers travelling in the Batticaloa–Colombo train were attacked at Gal-oya by a joint gang of army personnel and Sinhala goons. 42 houses were burnt and destroyed by the security forces in Mullaitivu. 24 dead bodies were recovered.

☐ At the Junction near Windsor Cinema in Jaffna, the army sprayed bullets into a queue of persons waiting to buy kerosene oil and several persons died and were injured. Among the fatal victims were one Sivarajah and his son Nirmalan aged 3.

☐ At Irupulai in the Jaffna district, the army opened fire, killing three Tamils including a child of 4 years.

DECEMBER 28, 29, 1984

☐ Reports were received that the Tamils girls detained in the Vavuniya army camp were kept naked and that many of them had been molested.

☐ 25 Tamil youths proceeding to the Colombo airport at Katunayake to go abroad were arrested though they were in possession of valid travel documents.

☐ Six Tamil women from Kokuthudavai and Kokilai reached a refugee camp in Mullaitivu complaining that they had been raped by army personnel. There are 21 Tamil refugee camps in the Mullaitivu area, sheltering nearly 25,000 families, all chased away from their homes by the security forces.

☐ Following the receipt of information of the alleged killing of a Sinhala businessman from Madavachchi area, the security forces in the company of Sinhala goons, went on a rampage attacking Tamil houses and shops.

☐ Of the five boats carrying Tamil refugees to India from north Sri Lanka, only two had reached Indian shores.

DECEMBER 30, 31, 1984

☐ A government spokesman criticised Tamil police officers for supporting Tamil militants.

☐ An employee at a rice mill at Omanthai in the Vavuniya district was shot dead while he was walking along the road, passing army personnel.

☐ A Tamil named Asirwatham aged 24 was shot dead by the security forces while fishing near Poonakari.

☐ 9 Tamil youths were arrested and detained by the army in Mullaitivu.

JANUARY 1-3, 1985

☐ The Sri Lankan Minister of National Security announced plans for compulsory military service for all young people to fight the Tamil militants.

☐ Over 200 Tamils were taken into custody in and around Alvai, Thikkam and Navaladi in the Jaffna district. Some of those arrested were below the age of 15 years.

☐ The Bishop of Jaffna appealed for help for the suffering people of Jaffna who are on the verge of starvation.

☐ 2,300 persons, many of them Sinhalese, including religious dignitaries and professionals have appealed for justice and peace and an end to all violence.

☐ At Punnalikkaduvan, Jaffna, security forces set fire to and destroyed a tractor carrying manure to farms.

JANUARY 4&5, 1985

☐ The security forces opened fire indiscriminately near Jaffna Hindu College. Three Tamils were killed on the spot and over 10 persons were seriously injured.

☐ At Chemmani Road four Tamils who were transporting firewood were shot and killed by security forces.

☐ At Kondavil in Jaffna, the army attacked and damaged a minibus and a car although the vehicles had due authorisation.

☐ Dr Sivagnanavel, the only orthopaedic surgeon attached to the Jaffna Hospital, was severely assaulted by security personnel while cycling towards the hospital. The hospital staff went on a sudden stoppage of work in protest which was ended following an apology tendered by Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne.

☐ Soldiers used force on shopkeepers in Tamil areas to buy Lion flags for sale to all householders to 'fly the flag' on 14.1.85, the Tamil festival day of Thaipongal.

☐ Over 580 Tamils were arrested in Jaffna town. The arrested youth were forced to kneel down in pouring rain for several hours before they were taken away.

☐ On 4.1.85, one Thamotharampillai and another (son of Kasippillai) were shot and killed on their way home from Nallur Kandasamy Temple.

☐ The sea coast villages of Kayts and Mathagal were subjected to naval shelling during nights, intended to terrorise the people so that they would abandon their homes.

☐ In Vavuniya, the army killed an entire family of five Tamils, including two small children.

☐ The Minister of National Security threatened that if the Sinhalese people newly settled in Mullaitivu district were attacked all the Tamils in the area would be collectively punished and chased away.

☐ Two Tamil women were raped by army personnel in the village of Eekalampathu in Muthur during a house-to-house search.

JANUARY 6&7, 1985

☐ The parish priest of Vankalai in the Mannar district, Fr. Bastian and two boys aged 10 and 12 were shot and killed within the church by the army. Twenty other nearby villagers including an old lady of 70 years were also killed. The dead body of the priest is believed to have been disposed of by the army. In the course of the same 'operation', the nunnery adjoining the church was also ransacked by the army and nuns molested.

☐ At Kudiyirruppu in Batticaloa, two Tamils were shot and killed by the army.

☐ At Kuppilan in Jaffna, one Tamil was shot and killed and 23 others arrested by the army.

☐ Nine Tamils were arrested at Sambaltivu, Trincomalee.

JANUARY 8, 9 1985

☐ Two Indian fishermen were shot and killed by the Sri Lankan navy near Dhanuskodi.

☐ The Bishops Conference has demanded an independent investigation into the murder of Fr. Bastian.

☐ Mr Subramaniam (village headman), Muthur, and five persons including Mr Panchalingam (special services officer of Verugal) were arrested by security forces.

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TAMILS ARE CITIZENS TOO

The following is the text of a letter sent by the Communist Party of Sri Lanka to President J.R. Jayawardene on 26 December 1984 regarding the difficulties and deprivations experienced by citizens of the north and east under conditions of the present military operations by the government's security forces:

'The Communist Party of Sri Lanka urges the government to take prompt and meaningful action to end the special hardships to which the mass of people in the northern and eastern provinces are subjected as a result of current military operations by the security services in these provinces.

'Shortages and the consequent escalation in the prices of foodstuffs and other essential articles in everyday use have become a major burden.'

'The virtual cessation of sea fishing after the establishment of the naval surveillance zone has led to a sharp reduction in the supply of fish to the consumers and the loss of livelihood to several hundreds of fishermen. The difficulties experienced by the latter have been still further enhanced by the virtual closure of fisheries harbours like Myliddy, Nagerkovil and Point Pedro and the removal of all fisherfolk from their homes situated in the so-called 'prohibited zone' of 100 metres from the sea which applies to the coast in the large areas of the north.

'It should also be mentioned that several schools, temples, churches and other public buildings also fall within this 'prohibited zone' and their normal functioning is thereby obstructed.

'The acute shortage of diesel and kerosene oil, as well as other fuels, has not only restricted the availability of public transport, but also denied farmers the fuel they need to work their irrigation pumps.

'Frequent and prolonged curfews have also made it difficult for families to obtain their daily needs and are especially severe on the poor who can only buy what they need on a day-to-day basis.

'Our party also calls for an end to the indiscriminate mass arrests — sometimes amounting to several hundred persons a day — of young people in several of these areas. The fact that the vast majority of them are released after several days of what has been described as "interrogation" only confirms the arbitrary nature of these mass arrests and detentions.

Irreparable damage

'In our opinion, irreparable damage is being done to the unity of Sri Lanka and to the equality and friendship that should prevail among the various ethnic communities that inhabit this country if any section of Sri Lankan citizens are subjected to these special hardships and made to feel that they are selected victims of collective punishment for activities for which the overwhelming majority of them are not responsible.

'We appreciate and support the assistance that the government gives to the Sinhalese families resident in some of these areas who have been compelled to flee their homes and live as refugees. We hope that the many shortcomings in this assistance will soon be overcome. In the same way, we ask that the special hardships experienced by the Tamil and other civilian populations of the north and east, who are as much citizens of this country as anyone else, should be ended.'

JAFFNA TUs PROTEST AGAINST STATE TERROR

Workers belonging to 13 trade unions demonstrated and picketed outside the Jaffna Kachcheri on December 28, demanding an end to state terrorism in the north.

Their demonstration attracted large crowds of spectators. The work of the Kachcheri came to a standstill as many of its employees joined the pickets.

Eventually the GA (Jaffna) agreed to receive representatives of the demonstrators in his Conference Hall. The demonstrators handed over to him a letter addressed to President Jayewardene demanding an end to state terrorism against and privations suffered by the mass of citizens in the north.

The trade unions, which have set up a joint committee, also decided later to:

(1) hold a delegate conference of constituent unions as well as unorganised unions as well as workplaces to mobilise support for the demands set out in the letter.

(2) organise a Day of Protest against state terrorism in the region; and

(3) address the joint all-island committee of 21 trade unions for such support and solidarity it could give, jointly and individually.

In this connection, a letter has been sent to L.W. Panditha, convenor of the body of 21 trade unions.

The northern region trade unions that took part in the demonstration are the CFTU, United Federation of Labour, CMU, PSTUF, Ceylon Teachers Union, GCSU, All Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union, Ceylon Trade Union Federation, All-Ceylon Tamil Pothu Thathimar Sangam, Cement General Workers Union, Sri Lanka Jathika Pravahana Sevaka Samithiya, Sri Lanka Post and Telecommunications Employees Union, and the Kooduravu Coliyar Thozil Sangam.

TEACHERS UNION PROTESTS AGAINST 'NAKED MILITARY OCCUPATION'

This is the text of a press statement issued by the Ceylon Teachers Union:

This government which has been crushing the democratic rights and squeezing the standard of living of the people from its very inception has demonstrated that it is now marching towards a naked military occupation in the Northern Peninsula, with the imposing of restrictions on the movements of the civilian population in the Jaffna District.

Putting the most inhuman Pass-Law in South Africa to shame, the government of Junius Richard Jayewardene, has totally banned the use of private vehicles including private buses and curtailed the movements of the civilian population to 2 hours in the morning from 6.00 to 8.00 and 2 hours in the afternoon from 2.00 to 4.00, apart from imposing curfew from 4.30 pm to 6.30 am. Notwithstanding this, the government has declared a stretch of sea in the North and the East totally prohibited.

Pushed to starvation

All these, we are compelled to state, have completely jeopardised the very existence of the civilian population in the North. The economic life will be brought to a standstill and the civilian population will be pushed to starvation as most will be deprived of their means to earn a living.

Listing of occupants in housholds and prohibiting the right to entertain anyone not listed, virtually breaks up family life and on the other hand, the government in effect, with all the newly imposed restrictions has brought the entire Tamil population in the North under house arrest. This is a gross violation of the Human Rights

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TRADE UNIONS CONDEMN STATE TERRORISM

Twenty of Sri Lanka's main trade union centres and individual unions have issued a joint appeal calling for a political solution to the ethnic problem and condemning the government's attempt to use state terrorism and military force instead.

The statement (based on a translation of the Sinhala text) says that the government's failure to propose a solution to the ethnic problem has caused the situation in the country to deteriorate for some time and that 'now it has indeed reached a dangerous stage'.

Suppress opponents

The present government, it says, 'followed various courses of action for the very outset to suppress political opponents, the working class and other mass organisations.

Today it has, in particular, resorted to a course of military action in order to suppress the Tamil-speaking people in the Northern and Eastern provinces and the people in the plantations.

Listing many acts of such suppression, the joint statement says:

- From time to time, and sometimes for days at a stretch, curfews are being enforced in the northern and eastern provinces;
- 'Shedding of blood of innocent people, gruesome murders, and acts of arson have become daily occurrences.'
- 'Inhuman acts such as killing and maiming of workers and civilian populations; rape, looting and destruction of property, arrest and torture of innocent citizens, especially youths.'
- Postal employees who were on duty at Murunkan Post Office on 4th December 1984 were shot and killed.'
- 'Places of religious worship have been broken into and brutal acts have been committed therein.'
- 'Fishermen and other daily wage earners who living in the "prohibited zone" have been "deprived of their means of livelihood, forced out of their homes, and reduced to a helpless state".'
- *'While condemning the brazen acts of terrorism that are being committed against the people of the northern and eastern provinces' says the joint statement, 'our trade unions demand from the government that these acts be stopped forthwith.*

'We express complete solidarity with the campaign that is being carried on by the trade unions in the northern and eastern provinces against these acts.'

Declaring that 'the government has commenced a war against the people of the northern and eastern provinces,' the joint statement adds:

All over the country

'Even though government suppression is manifest only in the northern and eastern provinces, as well as in the plantations, people in other provinces have not been spared from these repressive acts. On the whole, government suppression is taking place all over the country, thereby an extremely dangerous and alarming situation has arisen throughout the island.'

'The government,' the statement charges, 'is putting into operation a subtle plan to destroy leftist and democratic movements, making use of the ethnic problem. It has started to arm selected sections.

'State terrorism, which was used to suppress the movements of workers and other sections of the people for their rights, has now been supplemented with arms, and plans are afoot to use these specially selected armed sections to destroy people's movements.

'The government also uses all forms of propaganda to spread racism among the people, thereby diverting their attention from the political and economic problems they experience and preventing them from expressing opposition to the racist actions of the government. It wants to render the mass movements in other parts of the country ineffective so that it can carry on its military operations in the northern and eastern provinces without opposition.

'The government is even trying to make the masses party to such repressive actions.

So-called 'Defence Fund'

'We reject the so-called "Defence" Fund. A contribution to this so-called "Defence" Fund is a contribution to the suppression of the masses of this country.

'While emphasising that the ethnic problem cannot be solved through military action, our trade unions declare that the military actions being pursued at present are responsible for the loss of human lives and the unlimited economic burdens that are being heaped on the masses at the moment.

'Therefore, our trade unions demand that the military actions be stopped forthwith and that steps be taken to find a political solution by democratic means.'

The 21 organisations which signed the joint appeal are: Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions; Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation; Ceylon Mercantile Union; Public Service Trade Union Federation; Sri Lanka Independent Government Trade Union Federation; United Federation of Labour; Ceylon Trade Union Federation; All-Ceylon Government Clerical Union; All-Ceylon Trade Union Federation; Central Council of Ceylon Trade Unions; Democratic Workers Congress; United Government Workers Federation; Ceylon Estate Staffs Union; Desa Vimukthi Workers Centre; United Corporation and Mercantile Union; Ceylon Plantation Workers Union-Red Flag; Local Government Clerical Union; Sri Lanka Postal and Telecommunications Services Union; Lanka General Services Union; and All-Ceylon Corporation Employees Union.

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charter adopted by the United Nations to which Sri Lanka is also a signatory.

We therefore wish to lay emphasis on the fact that these schemes of this government are not restricted to the North itself. The trade union offices that were sealed off during the 1980 July strike still remain as they are. There is no necessity to write out the long list of opposition meetings that were broken up by government-sponsored goon-squads. There was no shame on the part of the government to employ its goondas in trying to quieten the judiciary. This government that tried to implicate the left organisations with the '83 Tamil progrom is now trying to make the public believe that the left is now in tow with the 'Insurgents', through multi-coloured posters. The Prevention of Terrorism Act that was brought into force at the expense of the North is now being openly used to repress the left organisations. The repression begun in the North will eventually march on the South.

Opening a new chapter

We therefore call on all democracy-loving organisations and individuals to join together in totally condemning these obnoxious, undemocratic, repressive laws of this totalitarian government while taking this opportunity to warn every organisation and individual that this will only be the opening of a new chapter that will bring the entire country under a bloody dictatorship.

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TAMIL ISSUE IN INDIAN PARLIAMENT

'DAILY REPORTS OF KILLINGS OF INNOCENT TAMILS'

The government assured the members in the Rajya Sabha that it would continue to try 'vigorously' for a political solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka so that Tamil refugees from that country could go back with dignity and without fear. Replying to a calling attention motion of Jaswant Singh (BJP) and two others, Minister of State for External Affairs Khurshed Alam Khan informed the House about the decision to release the 17 Indian fishermen caputured by the Sri Lankan authorities and said thery were expected to return on January 28.

He said the Sri Lankan issue had already been taken up at the UN level in the sub-committee for the protection of minorities as well as the Human Rights Commission. Khan said that India was in constant touch with friendly countries over the issue and had brought it to the notice of visiting dignitaries. It was also expected to take up the matter at the forthcoming meeting of the South Asia Regional Co-operation Committee, he said.

The Minister said the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka and that country's High Commissioner here were in touch with each other to see how the concerned parties could be brought back to the negotiating table. He said the issue was emotional but could not be resolved at an emotional level. He, therefore, advised the members to be patient and not talk about things like military action. Khan said that Commonwealth Secretary-General S. Ramphal had suggested that the Sri Lanka government and the TULF undertake a joint study of the situation, but he had no contact with India in this regard.

Compensation demanded

The Minister said the coast guard had been asked to intensify patrolling for the protection of Indian fishermen. The navy had also been asked to be vigilant. Regarding the three Indian fishermen killed, India had lodged strong protest and demanded compensation. The Government might also make some compensation on humanitarian grounds, he said.

Stating that a solution to the issue could be found only through negotiations, he described the disbanding of the All Party Conference as 'disappointing'. The Minister said the conference was disbanded not because of the attitude of the TULF towards the draft legislation introduced by President Jayewardene, as was sought to be made out, but because of the attitude of hard-liners on the other side.

Asserting that there was no change in the government's policy on the issue, he said India had not encouraged any terrorist activity. Sri Lanka had not been able to pin-point responsibility for any such activity. India had, in fact, discouraged violence, he said. Khan said that in certain areas settlements had come about to reduce majority of Tamils and a political solution would have to take this aspect into account. He also expressed the government's resolve to see that the 1974 agreement in regard to Katchathivu Island was honoured. 'There are daily reports of Tamil civilians being killed by the security forces. Many Tamils of Indian origin who had settled in the North and the East are among the victims,' he said. 'To compound all this, the Sri Lankan military has made Indian fishermen its special targets,' he added.

Baseless allegation

Khan said the Sri Lankan government had arrested many Indian fishermen, making a baseless allegation that they were terrorists. 'On later admissions of the government of Sri Lanka, the Indian fishermen who had been either killed, wounded or captured were all engaged in fishing. What is even more disturbing, over the last month, the Sri Lankan navy vessels have been crossing into our territorial waters to harass our fishermen and seize our catches,' the Minister said. Khan said that on January 11, when an armed Sri Lankan patrol craft intruded into our waters and was found harassing our fishermen, the coast guard apprehended it 'well within our waters. We have told the Sri Lankan government that we expect that no intrusion will take place in the future,' he said.

The Minister said the absence of any progress towards a political settlement and deterioration of the situation in Sri Lanka, might force more Tamils to seek refugee in India. It already had over 40,000 Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka and was looking after them on humanitarian grounds. The government hope the conditions in Sri Lanka would improve rapidly so that the refugees could go back in dignity and without fear, he said.

'Violence is no answer'

Khan said he was aware of the depth of feeling aroused all over the country by 'almost daily reports of outrages committed on the innocent Tamil population in Sri Lanka. Violence cannot provide the answer. It only leads to more violence. We urge it should end immediately,' he said.

Khan said that as the Prime Minister had reiterated there could be no alternative to a political solution acceptable to all concerned, within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity. 'The continuance of this situation has caused enormous human suffering and it remains our hope that the government of Sri Lanka will take an early initiative to settle this problem through negotiations,' he said.

Khan said it was not the government's intention to discuss aspects of the problem which were internal to Sri Lanka, but it was unfortunate that the Sri Lankan authorities were 'concentrating on security operations'. Though the All Party Conference was making no visible progress, its mere existence gave some hope. The draft legislation introduced by President Jayewardene was insufficient to meet Tamil aspirations, but was being considered seriously by the TULF with a view to improving it. Unfortunately it was rejected out of hand by the Sinhala parties and the Buddhist clergy and then withdrawn. The All Party Conference was terminated and 'there is now no indication that a political solution is being sought', he said, adding that it was a matter of 'grave disappointment and frustration'.

Crucial test

Initiating the discussion, Jaswant Singh said Sri Lanka posed a crucial test to Indian diplomacy. Jaswant Singh said that India was getting 'trapped' by describing the problem as ethnic, thereby reducing its size. The problem was political and sociological, he said. He called for formulation of a rational policy on Sri Lanka without interfering in that country's internal affairs.

MK condemns military terrorism

M. Kalyanasundaram (CPI) said that Tamils in Sri Lanka cannot survive without arms. Kalyanasundaram said imperialists were trying to whip up tension between India and Sri Lanka and condemned what he called 'military terrorism' in the island state. He wanted to know what lawful steps the government would take to protect the rights of Indian fishermen. He said government should ensure that Sri Lankan boats do not enter India's maritime boundaries.

V. Gopalasamy (DMK) said that for three decades the Tamils had been

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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MEDIA FILE

FOOL'S PARADISE

If our government and its kept media imagine that, after their sweeping electoral victory in Tamil Nadu and the rest of India, Premier Rajiv Gandhi and his government can ignore the compulsions in that country for more vigorous action against Sri Lanka, they are living in a fool's paradise. If they also think that, in consequence, they can continue and even escalate their policy of provocation and brinkmanship against our big neighbour, they are putting peace in this region and the fate of our country and people into unforgiveable jeopardy.

For there is clearly a limit to India's patience if reckless or uncontrolled actions on our government's part endanger its security, the lives of its citizens, its good-neighbour relations, or its economy. Even censorship or news blackout cannot hide the swelling alarm and indignation of India's government and people at what our government and sections of its security forces are doing. Premier Rajiv Gandhi has already spoken sharply, strongly and more than once about this. He has again repudiated any intention by India to send troops to Sri Lanka and has quite rightly said that our ethnic crisis is our own problem that we must solve for ourselves. But can anyone reasonably expect him to remain dumb and immobile about what goes on so close to India's fishing craft by our navy patrols and helicopters, or to the new wave of refugees fleeing to India to escape from state terrorism in the north? He has already told Reagan's two emissaries, Walters and Percy, that this situation is becoming 'intolerable'.

Prime Minister Premadasa's war of words and National Security Minister Athulathmudali's war of deeds against India may be important to them to win the support of the gung-ho racists in their struggle for succession. President Jayewardene, who looks on benignly, admits to NEWSWEEK that both atrocities and provocations exist, but asks 'What can I do?' and says that such things are 'inevitable' when a 'war' is on.

In India, Mr Amirthalingam is already publicly calling for 'more tangible steps' and a 'more direct line of action' by India in relation to Sri Lanka. Political forces in India demanding military action against Sri Lanka have started to raise their heads once again after their electoral debacle. India's seizure of one of our naval patrol boats and its crew is a clear warning message that things are moving to explosion point.

Fulminating against New Delhi's 'South Block' or braggadocio about Davids and Goliaths won't get us anywhere. And if anyone still believes that Uncle Sam will rush arms and marines to our aid if our confrontationist brinkmanship leads to direct conflict with India, General Walters and ex-Senator Percy have cleared up that illusion.

Our government must cool down, stop its anti-Indian provocations; defuse the situation and seek to restore normalcy and good-neighbour relations with India. Trigger-happy naval actions in the Palk Straits and army exceses and brutality in the north must be curbed. The threat to India's security from the intended facilities to the Seventh Fleet at Trincomalee and the new VOA station must be removed.

Left, radical and democratic forces must assert themselves at this moment. They must stop the disaster to which sections of our government and the social forces that support them are rushing with the happy abandon and the imperviousness of the fabled Gadarene swine.

(Kind courtesy of FORWARD, Editoral, 15.1.85)

TO J.R.

Sir,

We cannot too strongly record our disgust and anger at the manner in which your government continues to provoke a conflict situation vis-a-vis India. Apparently your regime's association with Israel and its secret service Mossad, has bred the illusion that Sri Lanka, like her current Zionist mentor, can be another midget-sized terror, playing David to India's Goliath.

Mr President, India is no Lebanon; and 800 million Indians, in case you have not noticed, have just demonstrated their resolve to remain united and unflinching in the face of the imperialist threat in the region. Anyone poking his nose in here is likely to have it undergo swift surgery. But it is obvious that you are counting on precisely that to portray India as the Big Bully in the region, and cook up grounds for inviting foreign intervention.

Such efforts are doomed to failure, as is the future of a regime like yours, which functions as a branch office for the US multinationals. India does NOT interfere in the politics of her neighbours. Even after the 1971 war with Pakistan, a victorious India did NOT impose a puppet regime on Bangladesh. On the other hand, we will not tolerate the slaying of innocent Indian fishermen and civilians by those thug-filled tubs which pass for your navy. Be warned.

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(By courtesy of BLITZ, February 1)

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○ **Total censorship:** The Sri Lankan government imposed a blanket censorship of news and pictures of all military operations and 'terrorist' activity in the Tamil dominated northern and eastern provinces as from 1.2.85.

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ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON'S ORDEAL

Dr Sivagnanavel is one of only five remaining qualified orthopaedic surgeons in Sri Lanka. All the other surgeons, many of them Sinhalese, had left for other parts of the world seeking security and better prospects.

Dr Sivagnanavel is attached to the Jaffna General Hospital where his duties, besides treating Tamil patients with broken bones caused by 'army action', included caring for the ailments of the members of the security forces.

Checking identity cards

On January 4, he was cycling to the hospital (his car could not be used for lack of petrol), when he saw the security forces in one of their frequent 'combing operations' at the junction of Brown Road/Arasady Road in Jaffna. The army was checking the identity cards of everyone.

The doctor, holding his identity card in his right hand, approached the 'check-point' on his bicycle. Before he reached the check-point, the soldiers standing along the road shouted at him to stop, which the doctor did, and got off the bicycle. The soldiers rushed at the doctor who showed them his identity card and spoke in Sinhala and disclosed his identity as a surgeon working at the Jaffna General Hospital.

Ready to shoot

As he was standing with both his hands raised in the air, one soldier placed a self-loading rifle at the doctor's head and another pressed a gun against his stomach, both having their fingers at the trigger ready to shoot. The doctor started shivering out of sheer fright.

Then one soldier shouted: 'Api Innakotta umba cyclekaramawa umba theng vevulenawa,' ('How dare you cycle in our presence; you are shivering now'), and assaulted the doctor. After two or three minutes, the soldier shouted: 'Thapang atha palla; a.' (Put your hands down.) The doctor obeyed the command. The identity card was snatched from the doctor's hand and he was subjected to a body search. Then the soldier shouted: 'Ganing cycle-palayang.' (Pick up the cycle and get away.) The doctor picked up the cycle from the ground and wheeled it away. (*Editor's note:* The English version does not fully reflect the rude and insulting tone and content of the soldiers' utterances in Sinhala.)

Personal apology

The doctor went to the hospital and reported his humiliating experience to the Medical Superintendent, the Director of Health Services and Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne, the military supremo in the North. The hospital staff who had heard of the incident, went on a sudden stoppage of work. Brigadier Seneviratne visited the hospital and tendered an apology personally to Dr Sivagnanavel.

It is learnt that the Medical Superintendent requested an assurance from the Brigadier that his men would desist from harassing and ill-treating the hospital staff, to which the Brigadier is reported to have replied, 'I wish I could. But it's no use for I am not in a position to account for the behaviour of my men'!

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FROM PAGE 18

agitating through peaceful means to get justice in Sri Lanka. Terrorism must not be confused with armed resistance, he said. He feared that by next year the entire Tamil community in Sri Lanka would be wiped out. There would be no need for the House to discuss it and would have to only mourn the dead, Gopalasamy said in a voice charged with emotion. He said the situation in Sri Lanka was going from bad to worse. He said India had failed to mobilise international public opinion on the issue. Netherlands had deported 45 Tamils. Other governments may follow suit, he feared. Gopalasamy said it was a matter of human rights. In Sri Lanka it was not a secessionist movement but a freedom movement. Calling for stern action, the DMK member asked if the government of India would recognise Tamil Eelam and was prepared to break diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka if it did not yield to India's requests.

Sushil Mohunta (Janata) said the Indian government should intervene in some manner to stop the genocide of Tamils and safeguard Indian territorial waters. He shared the view that India had failed to generate world opinion against the attack on Tamils. Was government prepared to deviate from the course taken so far and initiate strong action or going to be a silent witness to acts of genocide, he asked.

M.C. Bhandare (Congress-I) urged the government to strengthen the deployment of Indian naval force to protect Indian fishermen from further attacks by the Sri Lankan patrol boats. He also wanted to know what steps the Indian government would take to raise the issue of violation of human rights of the Sri Lankan Tamils at international forums like the United Nations.

PM's statement welcomed

Aladi Arunba (AIADMK) welcomed the statement of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the Sri Lankan issue but said mere statement would not be helpful in solving the problem. He suggested some 'drastic action' like a 'military operation' to protect the Sri Lankan Tamils.

K. Mohanan (CPI-M) disagreed with the AIADMK member and said his party did not favour Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka to solve the Tamil problem. It would not help solve the problem but would only complicate the issue and facilitate the intervention by superpowers in the region. Instead, we should mobilise world opinion against the oppression and killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka and take up the issue at forums like the NAM.

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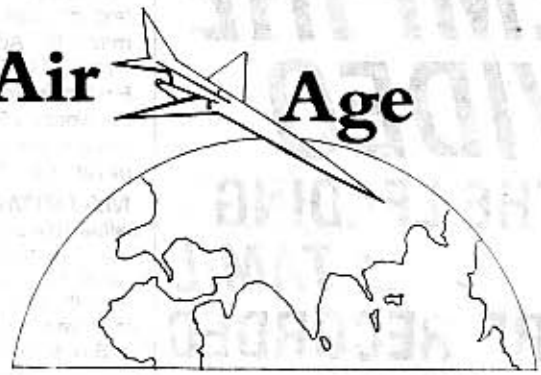

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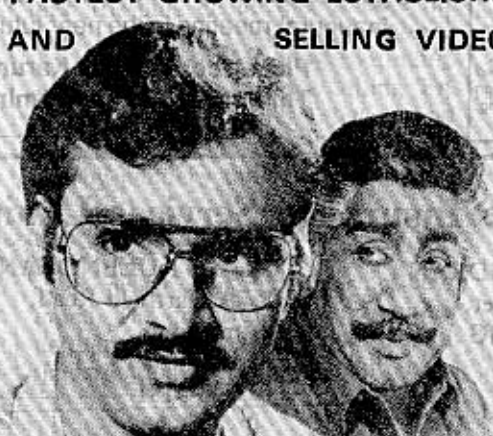

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FATHER MARY BASTIAN OMI

A service in memory of Father Mary Bastian was held on 16 February 1985 at the Guardian Angel parish church in Bury. It was well attended by Tamils from various parts of Great Britain and members of the local community including the member of Parliament, Mr Alistair Burt. The service was conducted by Fathers Pathinather, Bernard and Joseph Mary.

The sermon which was very moving dealt with Fr. Bastian's great compassion for the poor and needy, his inexhaustible energy and tireless work and life of self-denial. Though born in a rich family, he dedicated himself to the service of the afflicted as evident by his volunteering to work in Vankalai, a very remote village in the Mannar District. He considered it a crime to remain apathetic when innocent civilians were being terrorised and killed by the security forces.

It was mainly due to his efforts that the 106 civilians who were killed during the army rampage in Mannar on 6th December were given a decent burial. Unfortunately for him, this act of Christian charity, which brought to public notice the horrifying scale of the killing that had occurrred, made him a marked man in the eyes of the security forces. He was shot dead in his rectory on January 6th by soldiers and his body taken away by them.

He is survived by his aged parents Mr and Mrs Manuelpillai of Illavalai, sister Anne and brothers Anton and Joseph.

TAMILS IN SOUTH LONDON MEET

A well attended public meeting of Tamils, strongly committed to the freedom struggle was held on Saturday, 2nd February in Croydon, Surrey. Over 150 people living in south London and the adjoining counties attended the meeting.

The news that increasing agitation for concerted action at grassroots level by the militant groups was being made was warmly received by the gathering. It was also noted that not only in Great Britain, but also in many other parts of the world, efforts are being made to promote closer co-operation in order to strengthen the struggle for freedom. The most gratifying feature of the day was the presence of representatives of all the major groups, EPRLF, EROS, LTTE, PLOTE and TELO, on the same platform espousing the urgency for co-ordinated effort. While welcoming the news that some groups have reached an understanding, it was felt that it was hardly enough and that immediate efforts should be made to achieve a unified programme of action acceptable to all the groups.

The following resolution was unanimously accepted. 'Urgent and vigorous action must be taken by all groups engaged in the struggle for freedom to co-operate and co-ordinate all their activities towards the achievement of a free Eelam'.

FR. POPIELUSZKO & FR. BASTIAN

In communist Poland, a Catholic priest named Father Jerzy Popieluszko, an open critic of the regime and an avowed supporter of the outlawed Solidarity, was kidnapped, murdered and his body dumped in a river by secret service personnel. His assailants faced a much publicised trial, and were sentenced to long prison terms — 25, 15 and 14 years.

However, in Sri Lanka, which according to President Jayewardene is a 'five-star democracy', one cannot expect any trial of the death squads of the country's security forces who shot and killed Rev. Fr. Mary Bastian on January 6, 1985. Unlike his counterpart in Poland, Fr. Bastian was a simple ordinary village priest who never ventured into controversy or political matters. His only crime was to care for those who were rendered homeless and destitute as a result of continuing army atrocities. Besides killing Fr. Bastian, the troops also killed several others and ransacked and looted the nearby nunnery the same night.

Body not found

The priest's dead body has not been found. The government has mounted neither a search for the body nor an investigation to identify his killers as the communist regime in Poland did. On the contrary, the government and its own media are engaged in a disgraceful cover-up.

No less a person than the Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, made the preposterous allegation that the priest had actually gone to India to join the 'boys', meaning Tamil guerrillas!

However, everyone in Sri Lanka and knowledgeable persons elsewhere believe that the priest was killed and his body disposed of by the army in the usual way, viz by burning. Villagers near the army camp in Mannar have confirmed seeing flames rising from inside the army camp a few hours following the raid on the church.

High-handedness and brutality

The killing of Father Bastian who was in his clerical dress at the time he was gunned down preceded by the equally horrendous killing of Methodist Minister George Jeyarajasingham, who was shot and burned inside his vehicle on December 13, 1984, has shocked church establishments and human rights organisations. Even by their own notorious record, the sheer high-handedness and brutality of troops killing priests in their own churches, is unprecedented. The Bishop of Jaffna, Rt. Rev. B. Deogupillai, has called it a 'heinous crime committed by the security forces during the curfew hours'. The head of the Bishops' Conference, Rt. Rev. Marcus Fernando, has called for an impartial probe. Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of London, has expressed deep distress.

However, President Jayewardene remains unmoved. One must remember Sri Lanka is not communist Poland; it is a 'five-star democracy'.

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